

Jenin celebrates Israeli departure

JENIN (AFP) — Jubilant Palestinians took control of Jenin on Monday after 28 years of occupation, as Israeli troops quit the first of six towns to be evacuated under the West Bank self-rule deal.

The pullback fulfilled Israeli promises to continue the legacy of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin killed by a Jewish extremist opposed to the peace process.

Masked Palestinians fired in the air as the last Israeli troops rolled out of Jenin before dawn in 13 jeeps and a convoy of 500 Palestinians swept in, meeting the timetable set out by the September 26 deal signed by Mr. Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat. A further 500 police were due to arrive by early Tuesday.

Crowds danced and sang in the streets, as secretary general of the self-rule authority, Tayeb Abdul Rahim, solemnly raised the Palestinian flag in the grounds of the former Israeli military administration buildings.

Mr. Abdul Rahim said: "We have to thank the forces of peace in Israel, who respected their commitments to apply the second phase of autonomy."

"But we warn against the attempts by Jewish extremists to kill peace. Terrorism exists on the Israeli side and its stronghold is in the Israeli settlements."

Celebrating townsfolk had already unfurled huge flags on the roof of the building, a bated symbol of the Israeli occupation which began when the West Bank was seized by the Jewish state in 1967.

The departure of the Israelis, completing a pull-back which began on Oct. 25, took place in a festive atmosphere, compared to the bitter

stone-throwing which marked the pullout from the Gaza Strip last year.

Thousands of residents in the northern town turned out to greet the arriving police officers, who went straight out on patrol in the streets of the town.

But they tried in vain to control the traffic which converged on the town centre. Everywhere they went people stopped to talk to them, while restaurants were full to overflowing.

Palestinian police chief General Nasser Yousef said: "We are living a new phase, a phase in which we have chosen peace and the choice of peace is irreversible."

Policeman Hussein Nassar, 50, said: "I still can't believe it. Jenin was occupied yesterday. Today it is free. I am delighted."

Palestinian scouts in uniform paraded through the streets playing drums and marching behind a Palestinian flag.

The streets were hung with the red, black, green and white Palestinian flags along with pictures of Mr. Arafat. People joined hands in traditional folk dances, while others sang out their happiness.

Subhi Mustapha, 35, a Jenin farmer, said: "I am very, very happy. It is so nice after all these years to see Jenin jail now guarded by Palestinian police, as two Palestinian flags fluttered above.

Palestinian prisoners had been transferred to other jails in Israel several weeks before the handover of town to Palestinian control, and the jail had been freshly painted.

But the trip brought painful memories flooding back for many, who had been incarcerated inside the damp building with 300 prisoners



Palestinian policemen celebrate as they drive through Jenin after their arrival there to take over the West Bank town from departing Israeli soldiers (AFP photo)

Bitter memories of days in Jenin prison

JENIN (AFP) — Palestinian police on Monday opened the gates to the old Israeli jail here, allowing former inmates to revisit their cells, as thousands celebrated the end of Israeli occupation.

Hundreds of residents with their children flocked to see Jenin jail now guarded by Palestinian police, as two Palestinian flags fluttered above.

Palestinian prisoners had been transferred to other jails in Israel several weeks before the handover of town to Palestinian control, and the jail had been freshly painted.

But the trip brought painful memories flooding back for many, who had been incarcerated inside the damp building with 300 prisoners

under different circumstances.

"I feel like a child, I can't control my emotions. This prison represents our suffering and our struggle against the occupation. Israel used this prison as a cemetery to bury the living," said Jamal Shati, who spent four years in the jail from 1976 to 1980 and now works in the police.

Between 1988 and 1994 he was expelled to Lebanon by Israel.

Another prisoner Hisham Jilad, 34, hesitated outside his cell showing off the bed he had spent seven years for anti-Israeli activities.

"I had to go on hunger strike for 15 days to sleep on that miserable board. Before that we had to sleep on the

floor."

"Terrible memories are coming back to me. It reminds me of the noise of the keys carried by the guards, and the wait for the daily daily."

This prison should be kept intact for the traitors and the hoodlums are who trying to corrupt the Palestinian youth."

Mohammad Oweiss, a Hamas militant aged 21, recalled his seven months in the jail during the seven-year intifada.

"I came here to remember my days in prison. I know that I will never come back even if I don't share the opinion of the Palestinian Authority."

Outside the dank interior of the jail, street parties and celebrations could be heard as Jenin residents enjoyed to the full their first days without Israeli occupation.

His brother Saeed Freihat, 26, spent eight weeks in the

Kabul fronts are quiet

KABUL (AFP) — The frontlines around the besieged Afghan capital were quiet Monday, a day after government troops overran a string of rebel posts near the city, but a fresh salvo of rockets fell on Kabul.

One civilian was slightly wounded in the barrage of about eight rockets which fell in the area of the city housing the presidential palace and the defence ministry, hospital officials said.

On Saturday, 36 civilians were killed and 52 injured in rocket attacks on the city. The government accused the Taliban militia of carrying out the latest attacks.

He said Islamic leaders from Iran, Sudan, Turkey, Yemen, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Scandinavia, Bosnia, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as those of the Palestinian Hamas, had written a joint telegram of protest to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

They demanded that the cases against the Muslim Brotherhood members should be withdrawn, and they should be released, or at least should be tried in civil rather than military courts.

"The (Egyptian) government action is a violation of accepted principles of justice because nowhere in the world does law allow a common citizen to appear before a military court," they said in their message to Mr. Mubarak.

Another top general said the Taliban were "demolished" by their defeat and had abandoned some positions even before government troops had attacked them.

He added that 50 of the rebels had been killed and 100 injured in the battle which lasted two days.

Cairo says the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood has links with armed groups

Pakistani cleric flays Egypt for trial of Muslim Brothers

LAHORE (R) — The leader of Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami party said Sunday that heads of Islamic movement in a dozen countries had protested to Egypt over a crackdown that has put more than 150 members of the Muslim Brotherhood behind bars this year.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad told a news conference in the Pakistani city of Lahore that he and his colleagues feared that Egyptian military courts currently trying 49 of the detained Muslim Brotherhood members might award harsh sentences.

He said Islamic leaders from Iran, Sudan, Turkey, Yemen, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Scandinavia, Bosnia, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as those of the Palestinian Hamas, had written a joint telegram of protest to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

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"The (Egyptian) government action is a violation of accepted principles of justice because nowhere in the world does law allow a common citizen to appear before a military court," they said in their message to Mr. Mubarak.

The ministry said that in the first two incidents the suspected militants started shooting as soon as police

tried to overthrow the government.

The ministry said that in the first two incidents the suspected militants started shooting as soon as police approached their hideouts.

Kuwait denies report of Filipino 'hijacker'

KUWAIT (AP) — The Interior Ministry on Monday denied a newspaper report that a Filipino has confessed to being recruited by Iraq to hijack a Kuwaiti airliner.

The ministry said the man was arrested for illegal possession of firearms, but there was no evidence that he planned to commandeer an aircraft.

"When routinely checking the luggage of passengers travelling to Manila with Gulf Air, Kuwait Airport security officers found parts of a pistol in the bag of a passenger," said a ministry statement.

"When asked why these parts were in his bag, he said he had acquired them from a friend and kept them as a souvenir from the Iraqi invasion," the statement added.

Al Anha said Monday it stood by its story.

Iraqis raid farm

Iraqis armed with guns raided a Kuwaiti farm in the border area on Sunday and stole money and electrical appliances from workers, newspapers said.

Al Watan newspaper said police were investigating the alleged attack on a farm five kilometres from the frontier in the Al Abdala area.

The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) said it had received a complaint from Kuwaiti border police about the alleged incident and were investigating.

"UNIKOM cannot confirm or deny the allegation until the investigation is concluded," UNIKOM spokesman Salim Fahmawi said by telephone. Interior Ministry officials were not available for immediate comment.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and occupied it

for seven months before a U.S.-led coalition liberated the emirate in February 1991.

The Interior Ministry statement said the passports were old ones belonging to the arrested Filipino, and "preliminary investigations showed he had no connection with any Iraqi terrorist organisations as was published."

The ministry did not give the man's name, but the English-language daily Arab Times identified him as Jorge Gerafan, and said he had been working in Kuwait for 10 years.

Al Anha said Monday it stood by its story.

Iran tries accused '84 hijacker; verdict soon

NICOSIA (R) — Iran has tried a man accused of hijacking a plane on a domestic flight in 1984 and is to deliver a verdict at the weekend, the Iranian news agency IRNA said.

It said Gholam-Reza Vahidou was tried in open court on Sunday on charges of hijacking an Iranian passenger plane flying from Tehran to Bushehr, on the gulf coast about 750 kilometres south of the capital.

The statement linked the two suspected militants to two attacks on trains carrying foreign tourists in southern Egypt on Tuesday and Wednesday. Eleven Egyptians, a French woman and a Dutch man were wounded.

The terrorist, who also used the name Shumeil, has received advanced military training in Afghanistan and stayed for a while at one of the terrorist camps in Sudan, where he was responsible for training (Gamaa) cadres," the statement said.

The two men in civilian clothes and walkie-talkies delivered the corpse of the farm labourer to Mallawi general hospital on Sunday morning with papers identifying him as Yousri Abdul Hamid Farsi, 32, hospital officials said.

They demanded that the cases against the Muslim Brotherhood members should be withdrawn, and they should be released, or at least should be tried in civil rather than military courts.

"The (Egyptian) government action is a violation of accepted principles of justice because nowhere in the world does law allow a common citizen to appear before a military court," they said in their message to Mr. Mubarak.

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tried to overthrow the government.

More than 870 people have been killed in three years of conflict between police and Gamaa.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rafsanjani to visit South Africa

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani is to pay an official visit to South Africa at the end of March or in early April, South African Ambassador Musa Mohammad Mowla said in an interview published Tuesday. The trip, the first to the African country by an Iranian head of state since the 1979 Islamic revolution, was decided during a visit to South Africa by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, Keyhan Havai weekly said. Teheran and Pretoria reestablished diplomatic ties and rapidly developed political and economic relations after the end of apartheid and the coming to power of President Nelson Mandela in May 1994. After the revolution Iran strongly supported the African National Congress (ANC), once headed by Mr. Mandela, who visited here in July 1992. The two countries have notably developed ties in the fields of oil and mines in the past year. South Africa purchases three quarters of its oil from Iran, Mr. Mowla said.

Britain's Princess Anne on Bahrain visit

MANAMA (AP) — Britain's Princess Anne arrived here Monday on an official two-day visit during which she will inaugurate a new extension to the British embassy. She will also visit a rehabilitation centre for handicapped people and meet with Bahraini officials before she leaves Tuesday for Qatar and then Kuwait, the British embassy said. Princess Anne's last visit to Bahrain, a former British protectorate, was in 1991.

Ilieescu begins two-day visit to Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Romanian President Ion Iliescu arrived in Cairo on Monday for a two-day visit to meet Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak and seal cooperation agreements. Mr. Iliescu will also meet the head of the Cairo-based Arab League, Esmat Abdul Meguid, to discuss the conflict in Bosnia, the Egyptian news agency MENA said. Several cooperation accords, notably in the fields of health and labour, will be signed during his stay. Mr. Iliescu earlier underlined the good relations between his country and Egypt since the fall of Romania's communist government in 1989. Mr. Mubarak visited Bucharest last year.

Ciller cancels visit to Italy

ANKARA (AP) — Prime Minister Tansu Ciller has cancelled plans for a visit next week to Italy during which she was to have discussed Turkey's planned customs union with the European Union (EU), her office said. No reason for the cancellation was given. The office said Ms. Ciller would fly to Madrid on Wednesday for talks with Spanish leaders, but had cancelled the Italy leg of her tour originally scheduled for Friday. Turkish officials said last week that Ms. Ciller would visit several EU countries in a last ditch effort to garner support for the free trade deal with the EU. Turkey has come in for heavy criticism of its human rights record, especially towards its Kurdish minority, and there have been calls for the customs deal to be delayed until Ankara improves its record on the issue. Ms. Ciller plans to visit Britain on Nov. 22.

Israel condemns Nigerian executions

LAGOS (AP) — Israel has strongly condemned the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the president of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), along with eight other activists of the organisation. In a statement made available to AFP by the Israeli embassy in Nigeria, the government said that it "strongly deplores that the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria had ignored the numerous demands from all over the world calling for clemency." This "tragic event shows again the urgent need for Nigeria to act promptly to the return of civilian democratic rule," said the statement, issued by the Israeli foreign ministry.

It added that Ahmad was a close aide to Mustafa Hamza, whom Egypt and Ethiopia have named as the mastermind of failed attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June.

On Saturday Mohammad Ibrahim Dawoud was killed in a clash with police in Fayoum city, it added.

The third man killed was a farm labourer suspected of sheltering militants near the Nile Valley town of Mallawi, security sources said.

Two men in civilian clothes and walkie-talkies delivered the corpse of the farm labourer to Mallawi general hospital on Sunday morning with papers identifying him as Yousri Abdul Hamid Farsi, 32, hospital officials said.

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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Muhannad Halash 819220
Dr. Fayez Dabab 759155
Dr. Arifai Al Ashhab 62507
Dr. Munther Al Oraini 775995
Ferdous pharmacy 637055
Al Asmaa pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yaacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsiyan pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847652
DRID: Dr. Al Al Omari 272032
Dr. Al Akras Haddad 985550
Khalidh pharmacy 985417
ZARQA: Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-52700
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 06-532

Monitors report fraud in Azeri polls

BAKU (Agencies) — European parliamentary monitors monitoring Azerbaijan's general elections said Monday the poll was riddled with irregularities, but stopped short of calling the voting invalid.

In a statement, the Council of Europe delegation said it "condemns a certain number of irregularities and clear (cases of) fraud" in Sunday's parliamentary election and referendum.

The monitors cited the absence of controls over ballot boxes prior to voting and the presence of more than one person in voting booths.

The text also denounced the exclusion of opposition candidates and parties from the poll, and questioned the accuracy of preliminary results in the southern Caucasus ex-Soviet republic.

But despite their objections, observers nonetheless recognised that the poll constituted a first step towards a more democratic regime in the former Soviet republic.

"A very small step," French Deputy Jacques Baudel added.

He said Azerbaijan's current level of democracy meant the republic would

not be able to enter the Council of Europe.

Parties opposed to 72-year-old President Geydar Aliyev, including four excluded from the poll, denounced the election as a farce.

Sources at the country's Central Election Commission quoted by Interfax News Agency said a constitutional referendum on a draft constitution for Azerbaijan had still not mustered enough votes to be adopted.

The draft basic law, which would significantly expand the powers of Mr. Aliyev, required the backing of 75 per cent of those voting Sunday to be adopted, but so far only 70 per cent had given their backing, sources said.

Ballot counting was still continuing and official results for the referendum and elections to the 125-seat parliament will not be released for two weeks.

The European monitors said there had been "serious irregularities" in certain parties' difficulty in registering, and the practise of allowing heads of family to vote for their entire families provided identity documents were provided.

In one district, two candidates were killed in Nigerian plane crash

LAGOS (R) — At least 50 people were killed Monday when a Nigeria Airways plane crash-landed at Kaduna Airport in northern Nigeria and burst into flames, an official said.

"There are at least 50 dead and the number is growing," said the official at the Federal Civil Aviation Authority. About 120 people were on board the Boeing 737, he added.

He said rescue operations were under way.

The plane crash-landed in

the middle of the runway in Kaduna and caught fire, the official said.

A spokeswoman for Nigeria Airways said the plane was travelling from Jos, near Kaduna. She had no information on casualties.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

Nigeria Airways, the African nation's national carrier, has a severely depleted fleet due to seizures of its planes abroad

dates were struck off the list on the eve of the vote, leaving only one choice — the ruling party candidate.

Asim Mollazade, deputy chairman of the Popular Front, the only major opposition party allowed to participate, said there had been "massive fraud."

"Almost all the observers from the front were banned from polling booths in Baku" two hours before voting ended, he said.

"Outside the capital, our monitors were intimidated by the police," he said.

Observers from the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) did not immediately give their prognosis.

However, a source close to the OSCE-U.N. mission also said "there were many problems."

For example, the official participation rate was probably inaccurate, he said, since it jumped dramatically in the last hours of voting.

Meanwhile an Iranian newspaper said Sunday thousands of Iranians demonstrated against leaders of neighbouring Azerbaijan because a draft constitution put to referendum there makes no reference to Islam as the official religion.

The daily Kayhan said thousands of people in Tabriz, the main city of Iran's sizeable ethnic Azeri community, marched Friday in protest against the "anti-religion changes and omission of Islam" in the draft constitution.

They urged the people of Azerbaijan to reject the draft, put to referendum Sunday, along with the country's first parlimentary election since independence in 1991.

"We the people of Tabriz, knowing that our dear Azeri brothers are not satisfied with this huge treachery, hope they will reject or vote against the referendum," the paper quoted the organisers as saying.

Teheran Radio had a milder reaction.

"It is doubtful that by disregarding the Islamic identity in Azerbaijan Republic the possibility of access to stability and development would be guaranteed," it said.

Despite political differences between the two neighbours, trade and family relations thrive across their mutual border which opened after seven decades with the collapse of the Soviet Union.



Police try to restrain Matia Chhunbhora, a former female parliamentary deputy of the main opposition Awami League, during a scuffle with pro-strike activists in Dhaka's Farmgate area (AFP photo)

Bangladesh opposition spurns talks

DHAKA (R) — Opposition activists fought running battles with police on the third day of a national strike Monday as hopes faded for a peaceful resolution to a deepening political crisis.

Witnesses said heavily armed police had chased the hundreds of pickets chanting for Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to resign and pave the way for fresh elections.

Pickets hurled stones and firecracker-type bombs at security forces, one witness said. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

Sources in the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said they were upset by opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's decision to reject talks with Khaleda.

"We are desperately trying to resolve disputes created by the opposition demand for elections under a neutral authority... but the other side is not responding," a source told Reuters.

Witnesses said there were no vehicles except rickshaws on the streets of the capital Dhaka, a city of nine million, and other major cities Monday.

Pickets burned a three-wheel taxi carrying journalists on the outskirts of

Dhaka. Four people were killed and nearly 150 injured over the first two days of the six-day stoppage.

Police said strikers had clashed with security officers in Dhaka Sunday and with BNP activists in the nearby town of Narayanganj.

At least 30 people were injured in a bomb and gun battle between rival groups in Narayanganj Sunday, local officials said.

The strike is the latest in a long series of stoppages and transport blockades organised by the main opposition parties in their campaign to force Mrs. Khaleda to step down and allow elections to a neutral caretaker administration.

Mrs. Khaleda, elected in 1991 in what was billed as Bangladesh's first free election, has so far rejected the demands as unconstitutional.

But on Sunday she sent a letter to Mrs. Hasina, chief of the Awami League, Bangladesh's largest opposition group, proposing direct talks to resolve the crisis.

Awami sources told reporters Monday that Mrs. Hasina had turned down the proposal because the prime

minister had failed to make it clear whether she accepted the demand for a caretaker government.

"If she does, only then can there be a dialogue or negotiations," a source quoted Mrs. Hasina as saying.

Mrs. Khaleda proposed that there should be an open agenda and no preconditions for the talks.

The opposition accuses Mrs. Khaleda's government of by-election fraud and corruption, and says no election under her will be free and fair. The next election is not due before March 1996.

The campaign against Mrs. Khaleda intensified after opposition legislators resigned from parliament in December, making it mandatory for the election commission to hold by-elections to fill their posts.

One BNP source said Monday the government might instead dissolve parliament before Nov. 22, the deadline for announcing by-election schedules, and call general elections in January.

"Many among the BNP leadership believe this will help avert a worse political crisis," he said.

Expedition to walk to the South Pole

SANTIAGO, Chile (R) — A Chilean military team this month will set out to walk across Antarctica to the South Pole, aiming to become the first Latin American expedition across the continent on foot, the newspaper *El Mercurio* reported Sunday.

The four-member team was to leave from the southern port of Punta Arenas to the Patriot Hills base in Antarctica Sunday morning, but gale force winds threatened to delay the flight, said *El Mercurio*. The officers plan to walk the 1,200 kilometers from Patriot Hills, the Chilean-claimed sector of the continent, to the South Pole in 50 days.

The biggest dangers on the route, which crosses rugged mountain ranges, are hidden ice crevasses which are only visible due to a change in the colour of the surface snow, officials said.

The expedition is the result of an initiative by army chief General Augusto Pinochet to increase knowledge of Chile's Antarctic territory, said expedition member Colonel Mario Pepi.

The men, all members of the army's mountaineering school, will pull sledges weighing around 300 pounds (140 kilograms) and face temperatures averaging minus 86 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 30 degrees centigrade).

Russian speaker scolds party animals

MOSCOW (AP) — Parliament's pistol-packing party animals came in for a scolding for their late hours and wild ways. National television news showed Speaker Ivan Rybkin at the podium lecturing members of the Duma, the lower house, and reminding them to hold by-elections to fill their posts.

One BNP source said Monday the government might instead dissolve parliament before Nov. 22, the deadline for announcing by-election schedules, and call general elections in January.

"Deputies should stop boasting about their weapons," he said. "Weapons shouldn't be allowed inside the Duma building." The dressing down was provoked by complaints that a security officer had struck a parliamentary candidate, Mr. Rybkin, rebuffed the complaint, saying the man was hurt during a party in the canteen so wild deputies kicked out the glass doors. "And while we're on the subject, I'd like to remind you that day after day, the lights are burning until 2 or 3 in the morning," he said. "And when the guards check, they find aides — and deputies — lying around.

Yes, yes. The deputies, too, too. Mr. Rybkin didn't give any names. But he threatened to unless legislators behave.

Mr. Kohl is also placing military cooperation on the agenda with a visit to the showcase 196th Infantry Division in Tianjin, sparking accusations at home that he is restoring the good name of the Chinese military that crushed the pro-democracy protests in 1989.

Bonn government sources say Germany does not wish to normalise military relations with China — still subject to an European Union arms embargo — and that the 196th Division took no part in the Tiananmen massacre.

They say Bonn simply wants to match the United States in its level of military cooperation with Beijing by exploring ways to work together on military medicine or training methods.

China finds 130-million-year-old dinosaur footprints

BEIJING (R) — China has found 20 footprints made by dinosaurs as they waddled or galloped across the plains of north China about 130 million years ago, Xinhua News Agency said Sunday. About 100 of the footprints have now been found in the area, it said.

The largest measures 60 cm (23 in) by 50 cm (20 in), while the smallest is 20 cm (8 in) by 14 cm (5.5 in). The footprints show some of the dinosaurs were waddling and some were galloping with only their toes touching the ground, Xinhua said.

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Australian health officials act as newly discovered virus claims 2 lives

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian health officials and scientists have launched a joint effort to find the origins of a newly emerged and deadly virus, which has claimed at least two human lives after killing 15 horses.

In what has been a bumper year for aggressive and often mysterious viruses — thought responsible for blinding kangaroos, crippling ostriches, wiping out millions of pelicans and threatening Australia's abundant rabbit population — the equine morbillivirus (EMV) is the biggest worry.

The attack gave way to a series of searches of former racing stables.

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Sri Lanka's Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte uses a walking stick as he moves to inspect frontline troops fighting Tamil Tiger rebels inside the rebel stronghold of the Jaffna peninsula (AFP photo)

Yeltsin returns to normal work

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin, who is still in hospital after a mild heart attack, resumed his normal work schedule Monday and plans a series of meetings with top officials, Russian news agencies said Monday.

"Starting from today Russian President Boris Yeltsin's routine working schedule will be the same as if he were in the Kremlin," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin's chief spokesman, Sergei Medvedev as saying.

Mr. Medvedev said Mr. Yeltsin would meet ministers and political advisers Monday, followed by talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev Tuesday — Mr. Yeltsin's first meeting with a foreign leader since he was rushed to hospital on Oct. 26.

Aides have said the health of the 64-year-old Russian leader is improving steadily. They say the president is in full command of the coun-

try and is carrying out all his duties.

But they also say Mr. Yeltsin must stay under close medical supervision until the end of November at least.

Mr. Yeltsin has made only one brief television appearance since he was taken ill, in which he looked weak and slurred his words in an edited 50-second clip.

Interfax News Agency said Mr. Yeltsin would meet political adviser Georgy Satarov Monday to discuss the political situation ahead of a parliamentary election due on Dec. 17.

Opinion polls show the Communist Party is likely to do well at the polls, which have already been marred by a string of political scandals. Before he was taken ill, Mr. Yeltsin said it was important to stop the Communists.

"Yeltsin will discuss with Satarov the pre-election situation, the balance of political powers ahead of the

polls...and widely-circulated statements about the election law being unconstitutional," Interfax quoted Mr. Medvedev as saying.

Many parties have argued the current election laws could distort the balance of power in a future parliament and some politicians have suggested postponing the polls. But officials have quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying the election should go ahead.

TASS quoted Mr. Medvedev as saying Mr. Yeltsin would also meet his senior aide, Viktor Ilyushin, and protocol chief, Vladimir Shevchenko Monday. He will also resume regular meetings with his administration chief, Sergei Filatov.

Mr. Yeltsin expected telephone reports from Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and Foreign Intelligence Service chief Yevgeny Primakov, the press secretary said.

U.K. witness testifies of 20 more bodies in West case

WINCHESTER, England (AFP) — The witness whose surprise testimony sent Rosemary West's 10-count murder trial off on a bizarre spin last week returned to court by ambulance Monday with testimony that there might be as many as 20 other bodies.

Janet Leach, 39, collapsed in the witness box last Tuesday as she gave starkly contrasting testimony on Fred West's involvement in the 10 murders with which his widow is charged.

Returning in a wheelchair Monday, she made two new disclosures.

She admitted making a £100,000 (\$160,000) tabloid deal for exclusive rights to her story.

And she said Mr. West told her secretly that there were another 20 bodies buried away from his house on Cromwell Street in Gloucester, central England.

Ms. Leach, who as an impartial observer had sat in on police interviews in which Fred West made detailed confessions to the murders, testified that Mr. West told her privately he had made a pact to take the blame and protect his wife.

Fred West committed suicide in jail last January while under indictment for the murders of 12 girls and young women.

Rosemary West, his 41-year-old widow and a mother of eight, was charged with 10 of the murders. She has pleaded innocent.

Fred West's testimony, in taped police interrogations played in court, said he had affairs with many of the victims and killed them because they had threatened to tell his wife.

He also told how he killed his daughter, Heather, to "shut her up" when she scolded him, dismembering her body when Rosemary was not shopping and sniffing the pieces in a trash bin in the garden.

Again and again, he said on the tapes that Rosemary had no part in or knowledge of what he had done.

But Ms. Leach, a 39-year-old charity worker who participated as an "appropriate adult," appointed when a suspect's mental capacity is in doubt, said Fred West confided in her privately and at length.

She said he told her things which directly contrasted what he had told the police, but that she never told the police about it.

On Monday, returning to court in a wheelchair after six days in hospital, she admitted under defence cross-examination that she had made a £100,000 (\$160,000) deal with Mirror Group newspapers for exclusive rights to her story.

Sri Lanka army shells Tamil rebel naval base

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's Tamil rebels said Monday the army had shelled Valvedditurai, home to their Sea Tiger naval wing, which had been untouched in the latest military offensive to crush the rebels in their non-boreal Jaffna stronghold.

The shelling was directed into Point Pedro Cape, the city area, port area, Navindil and Valvedditurai residential areas," the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said in a statement.

Valvedditurai is home to Tiger chieftain Velupillai Prabhakaran and the main base of their Sea Tiger naval wing, which has become a major threat to the island's tiny navy on which the army depends for its supplies.

A military spokesman said he did not know anything about the shelling, which the LTTE said occurred Saturday.

The army appears to have ignored the area before the alleged shelling took place, instead pushing south from

their Palaly Air Base to the gates of Jaffna City after almost a month of fierce fighting.

An army statement said troops resumed their advance at dawn Monday, pushing further south of Urumpirai and Kopai where they overran Saturday a huge underground complex and arms dump, among the last lines of the rebels' defence of Jaffna.

"The combat is coming very close to the safety zone (in Jaffna City)," a Western relief worker in touch with colleagues in Jaffna told Reuters. "It is going to be critical in the days to come."

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The LTTE statement also said their most senior female leader, Lieutenant Colonel Akila, had died in action against government troops while defending Jaffna.

It said Col. Akila, from Manipai in the Jaffna peninsula, was a veteran of several battles in their 12-year war for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east, in which more than 50,000 people have died.

But it was not clear when the female guerrilla leader was killed as the statement said she "attained martyrdom on 30.11.95 during the defence of Jaffna."

Col. Akila, along with LTTE leader Prabhakaran, was among those accused of involvement in the murder of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was blown up by a suspected female Tamil rebel suicide bomber in May 1991.

The most urgent needs are plastic sheets to provide people cover from the monsoon rain, (along with) food and medicine," he said.

"The refugees are still moving. Around 80,000 to 100,000 people have crossed the Jaffna Lagoon

Canada spied on S. Korea, Japan and Mexico

TORONTO (R) — Canada spied on friendly countries such as South Korea, Mexico and Japan, a former employee of the country's electronic espionage agency told the CTV television network Sunday.

"I spied on the (South) Korean government for the Canadian government," Jane Shorten, who worked for Canada's Communications Security Establishment (CSE) as an analyst from 1986 to 1994, said in a report on CTV's late news broadcast.

Returning in a wheelchair Monday, she made two new disclosures.

She admitted making a £100,000 (\$160,000) tabloid deal for exclusive rights to her story.

And she said Mr. West told her secretly that there were another 20 bodies buried away from his house on Cromwell Street in Gloucester, central England.

Ms. Shorten, 38, said she was involved in a project code-named Aquarian that was begun in 1991 to gather economic, defence and security intelligence on South Korea.

"It was basically communica-

tions between the South

Korean embassy in Ottawa

sults and diplomats in Canada and around the world, she said.

Mexico was also spied upon while it negotiated to join Canada and the United States in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), she said.

The eavesdropping included the secret discussions of South Korean officials discussing the multi-billion-dollar purchase of Canadian nuclear reactors, she told CTV.

A separate entity from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSE specialises in electronic espionage, monitoring radio and other transmissions for useful information.

After the cold war ended, CSE shifted its attention from the Soviet Union and its allies to friendly countries, Ms. Shorten told CTV.

She said she was aware of electronic monitoring of communications from the Japanese embassy in Ottawa.

Officials at Canada's Foreign Affairs Department

were not immediately available for comment.

CSE is part of the Defence Department but Ms. Shorten said senior officials at the Foreign Affairs Department were aware of its activities and eager for the information it gathered.

Earlier this year, in the wake of accusations that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency spied on Japanese negotiators during automotive trade talks, the Canadian government denied that it engaged in such activity.

Ms. Shorten said she was aware her revelations could result in prosecution but felt the risk of prison was worth it.

"I've lived with this information for so long I just think it's time that Canada knows what CSE is doing," she told CTV.

Japan minister resigns, smooths Korea row

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese cabinet minister whose comment that Japan did "good things" during its colonial rule of Korea threatened a summit meeting between the two nations announced his resignation Monday.

In a news conference broadcast live on television, Takami Eto, head of the Management and Coordination Agency, said: "I have submitted my resignation to Prime Minister (Tomiochi) Murayama."

In Seoul, Foreign Ministry spokesman Sub Dae-Won welcomed Mr. Eto's resignation and told reporters it was "a natural step for relations between Korea and Japan."

Mr. Eto had come under increasing pressure at home and from Seoul to step down for remarks he made last month during an off-the-record briefing with Japanese reporters favourably describing Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of Korea.

Again and again, he said on the tapes that Rosemary had no part in or knowledge of what he had done.

But Ms. Leach, a 39-year-old charity worker who participated as an "appropriate adult," appointed when a suspect's mental capacity is in doubt, said Fred West confided in her privately and at length.

She said he told her things which directly contrasted what he had told the police, but that she never told the police about it.

On Monday, returning to court in a wheelchair after six days in hospital, she admitted under defence cross-examination that she had made a £100,000 (\$160,000) deal with Mirror Group newspapers for exclusive rights to her story.

Eto. The Eto furore erupted last week when the contents of his briefing were revealed in the South Korean press.

"During the colonial period, Japan also did good things," Mr. Eto told reporters during the briefing.

"We erected schools and universities and substantially raised the level of education, laid 5,000 kilometres of railroads, conducted irrigation, improved port facilities and planted trees in the hills," he said.

Mr. Eto gave the briefing at the height of a row set off by a statement by Mr. Murayama in parliament that the 1910 treaty by which Japan annexed Korea was technically valid.

Many historians say Japan forced the treaty on a weak Korean government.

The Asahi Shimbun newspaper said Mr. Eto remarked in the briefing that Mr. Murayama was wrong to say the treaty was forced.

"If we start saying that Japan's annexation of Korea

was invalid, (many other) treaties will become invalid. It was an era when weak countries were beaten like that, so it was just too bad," the Asahi quoted Mr. Eto as saying.

Mr. Murayama defused the row over his remarks when he issued a "clarification" saying the two countries were on an "unequal footing" when the treaty was signed.

The day after the row over Mr. Eto's remarks broke, the minister tried to placate South Korea by withdrawing his comments and apologising for hurting the feelings of Koreans.

"Although it was off the record, I regret it caused a misunderstanding," Mr. Eto said.

But South Korea refused to accept anything short of Mr. Eto's resignation or dismissal, even cancelling at the last minute a proposed visit to Seoul last weekend by Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono.

"I think it is something that could develop considerable clout and strength," New Zealand Foreign Minister Don McKinnon told reporters.

"We would want to hear from the people of Nigeria themselves, those in power, what steps they envisage in response to the punishment, or the suspension, that has been decided upon by the meeting here," Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe said.

Nigeria's Ikimi accused the Commonwealth, which groups Britain and its former colonies, of interfering in the internal affairs of member states.

"The impact of this decision on Nigeria will be far-

Commonwealth sharpens 'cutting edge' on rights

AUCKLAND (R) — The Commonwealth's top official said Monday it had sharpened its "cutting edge" on human rights at a landmark summit that saw the disgrace and suspension of Nigeria.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi accused the Commonwealth of violating its own democratic principles and putting its survival at risk.

On Monday, returning to court in a wheelchair after six days in hospital, she admitted under defence cross-examination that she had made a £100,000 (\$160,000) deal with Mirror Group newspapers for exclusive rights to her story.

reaching. There is no question that the Commonwealth has taken a big gamble," he told a news conference.

"This kind of gross abuse of the Harare principles, in its enforcement, is bound to subvert the sovereignty of member states and thereby threaten the very existence of the Commonwealth."

British Overseas Development Minister Lynda Chalker rejected Mr. Ikimi's charge that the Commonwealth had picked on Nigeria unfairly.

Member states gave Nigeria two years — until their next meeting in Britain in 1997 — to clean up its act or face outright expulsion.

Sharif Zeid recalls years with King: 'A daring, gracious and sensitive man'

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

PRIME MINISTER Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker emphasises two aspects of King Hussein's personality: That of a leader with a vision who is ready to make hard decisions and take risks for his country, and that of a gracious, caring king who is determined to help make a better life for his people.

The recollection of the past is full of anecdotes. Sharif Zeid speaks of incidents, decisions and stands that "gave me an insight" into the King's personality.

In 1953, the prime minister recollects in an interview with the Jordan Times, an Israeli attack on a West Bank village produced a very violent reaction among the people and demonstrations erupted in the West Bank and in Amman.

"We (King Hussein, Sharif Zeid and the late Sharif Nasser Ben Jamil) were sitting in our house and from there could see the centre of the town and there was a violent demonstration with clashes between the demonstrators and the police," Sharif Zeid says.

Suddenly, the King stood up and moved towards his car and drove into the middle of the demonstration along with Sharif Zeid and late Sharif Nasser. When the people saw the King, Sharif Zeid remembers, the

demonstration stopped and the demonstrators started clapping and shouting "ya'aseh al malek, ya'aseh al malek, long live the King."

The King drove into the middle of the demonstration with no security to speak of, says Sharif Zeid. His guards were four policemen in one car and all that the King and his companions had were hand guns that were not enough to defend themselves in case of an attack.

This incident sticks in my mind. (The King) was no more than 18 and a half years old and for him to make a decision like that on the spot gave me an insight into his bravery, which after

all those years, does not need any proof," says Sharif Zeid, who started his career as a military officer who then became commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces before moving into politics as chief of the Royal Court in 1989.

Nor does the King's "humane feelings" towards his people need to be elaborated upon, the prime minister believes.

"Once again, anecdotes tell the story. In 1956, the King and Sharif Zeid were leaving the Royal Court for lunch. On the way out, the King stopped to collect some cursive to the surprise of his companion. His Majesty drove into Amanin, stopped at traffic lights where young children were gathered to sell chewing gum.

"They (the children) came running to him and he gave money to each one of them," says Sharif Zeid, pointing out that the guards, upon what clearly were earlier instructions given to them, just stood watching as the kids ran towards the King.

"This to me was another sign of the King's human feelings towards his people," Sharif Zeid says.

As a soldier, Sharif Zeid remembers the King's concern for developing the armed forces since he took the helm at times of turbulence and instability in the whole area.

As a politician he stresses that King Hussein believes in institutionalising democracy in the country and his commitment to that has not waned.

"Just after taking over his constitutional responsibilities, (King Hussein) wanted to develop within the armed forces a calibre of Jordanian officers who can take command" of the army, which was then led by the British officers, Sharif Zeid says.

When the King informed John B. Glubb of his plans, the British officer who commanded the army at the time, responded by saying that Jordanian officers can start assuming major commands in the armed forces in 1972.

That "made him think that we need to get rid of the British" and the King told a number of Jordanian officers to be prepared for assuming leadership position in the armed forces. Sharif Zeid says.

On March 1, 1956, the King arabised the army, relieving Gen. Glubb of his responsibilities, turning the leadership of the army to Jordanian officers.

Since then, the King has worked to modernise the armed forces, providing them with the necessary training and the sufficient equipment to perform their duties.

"(The King) believes in having hard-hitting, well-trained and well-disciplined armed forces, which we have," says Sharif Zeid, the soldier-turned-politician after rising to the rank of field marshal in the armed forces.

"The King gave the army a lot of his time. He knew officers by name and he used to spend days visiting the units that were on alert, talking to them, meeting with them and joking with them."

The King determined to introduce democracy into the country in line with a conviction that every Jordanian counts and should play a role in shaping the country's future, says Sharif Zeid.

Sharif Zeid remembers how the King instructed his prime minister in 1956 to hold parliamentary elections "when democracy was something that did not exist in the Arab World."

Elections were held in 1956, says Sharif Zeid, during an era of surging Arab nationalism, and "they (the elections) were totally free."

But many of those elected "were left-leaning and came with attitudes that were not as healthy as one would have hoped and we started having indications of what we had recently: not democracy but really bordering on anarchy," says Sharif Zeid.

The parliament was eventually dissolved when political parties, which were cooperating with other parties with similar agendas in other parts of the Arab World, started challenging the regime.

Democracy was badly misused," says Sharif Zeid.

The King instructed the government to hold elections in 1956 because he "believed sincerely (in 1956) as he does until this day" that democracy is

the way, says Sharif Zeid.

"He did not need to do it. He was strong, he was popular and he was firmly in control of his country," says Sharif Zeid.

"But the vision (for introducing democracy) never left the King" and parliamentary elections were held in 1989 when Sharif Zeid was prime minister for the first time.

"I think that we have established a system where there will be total democracy within its constraints."

Four years after the young Prince Hussein became the King of Jordan when the country was facing enormous domestic and regional challenges, Sharif Zeid points to many difficult moments and turning points in the life of the King and country as he lists the achievements that have been made.

Prior to the 1967 war with Israel, the King visited the army units deployed in the West Bank with message. "I hope there will be no war because we are not prepared for it, not only in Jordan but in the rest of the Arab countries also while the Israelis are very well prepared. Let's hope there will be no war because the outcome will not be positive," Sharif Zeid quotes the King as having told the 60th Armoured Brigade which he was commanding at the time.

But if war breaks out, the King told the army. "All I want from you is to do your best and to remember that you are members of the Jordan Arab army that has the tradition and the history of bravery."

Jordan subsequently had no choice but to enter the war in which the Arabs were defeated.

"I think mentally (the King) was ready for it but it was such a shock, especially the loss of Jerusalem. I think until this day not a day passes without His Majesty thinking about Jerusalem as he feels so strongly about it," Sharif Zeid says.

The King remembers the 1968

Karameh battle in the same way, says Sharif Zeid, when the Israeli army suffered its first military defeat in battle at the hands of the Jordanian armed forces. "The Israelis admit they lost this battle," says Sharif Zeid.

As Sharif Zeid speaks about the achievements of Jordan under the reign of King Hussein, he points out that these achievements should be viewed within the context of the limited resources and challenges against which the Kingdom has had to work.

Against that backdrop, what was achieved is "nothing short of a miracle, I believe," says Sharif Zeid.

"Only 45 or 50 years ago we had only one high school...now go over our countryside and you will see that every little village has schools..." says Sharif Zeid.

"Look at the stature of our country in the world," he says.

For a country that can hardly make ends meet to achieve all this is a source of pride, he says. "I think we should all be proud of this as Jordanians and be thankful to the man who helped make it."

And Sharif Zeid believes that the majority of the people recognise the achievements and stand behind their King, a feeling which he believes King Hussein shares.

"The King believes that the silent majority is very much in favour of what he is doing," says Sharif Zeid.

But in any democratic system, he says, there is bound to be some exceptions. "Sometimes because of His Majesty's grace, because he is so ready to forgive, some people misuse these attributes of the King who can have all the power in his hands if he wants," says Sharif Zeid.

But the majority realise that the King forgives out of his own will, offers amnesties out of his own grace and not under any sort of pressure.

"The majority of the people realise that and appreciate it," says Sharif Zeid.



By Fawaz Al Khreisha

At school with the King

time he was known for his intelligence and courage. He was honest, urbane, generous and cooperative, always ready to serve others and do voluntary work.

We would await the 10:30 school break at the Bishop School as always in great anticipation of a felafel sandwich from the vendor, Abdo Al Hijazi, who always stood by the school gate.

Hussein was just as eager as the rest of us to eat the felafel sandwich. But schoolmate Mohammad Bedawi and I often had no money and could not afford to buy the sandwich, opting instead to stand by and watch the others eat.

Hussein would then split his sandwich into three parts giving us the largest and insisting that we share with him his snack. This generous act helped deepen the roots of our relationship and our love for Hussein.

There was the day when a snake slithered by while we were gathered in the school yard. The boys ran off in a panic. Hussein remained where he was, firm in his position, until the snake slithered out of sight.

I remember our mate Mohammad Bedawi falling ill one day and being admitted to Malhas Hospital. Hussein suggested that we visit him. As we had no money to buy the sick boy a gift, Hussein took it upon himself to bring one and presented it in the name of all of us.

Hussein loved voluntary work. One day the school assigned plots of land where the boys could plant trees. Hussein, Hiratchi and I were in the same group assigned to a specific plot. I dug and cleared the hole in the ground while Hussein planted and watered the tree. Later we found it to be the only tree that grew while other trees planted by other boys wilted away.

"Your hands are green," we would call out to him.

I have recently passed by the spot where we planted that tree. It is still in

place, a sturdy tree spread out magnificently.

Hussein has always had a fancy for sports since his early years and used to take risky adventures. He participated in all sports and was particularly good at football, basketball and track-race as well as cycling.

The young prince was a very social person and never one to decline an invitation. I invited him to visit my bedouin clan in Muwaqqar on my birthday where he sat on the ground with us sipping coffee and later eating mansaf. He loved the bedouins and they reciprocated his love and admired the young man.

When a janitor at the palace died the King himself went to visit the bereaved family to offer condolences.

The janitor's home lay at some distance from the main road and so the King continued the trip on foot through dusty paths. After offering condolences and financial assistance the King ordered that the road leading to the janitor's house be completed and properly paved.

One winter, the area of western Sweileh was covered with a blanket of snow, cutting off many residents.

As I knew Hussein as King and leader when I was serving as an army officer and came to learn more and more about the man. A strong and humanitarian leader, he knew how to extend mercy and kindness, even in the face of adversity.

I remember the groups of army officers who were led astray and were involved in two conspiracies against him. One was led by Ali Abu Nuwar and the other by Sadeq Al Sharee who were subsequently sentenced to death.

But the King soon pardoned them, thus paving the way for them to return to the fold—loyal to the King, and assuming high positions later.

In 1984 I accompanied my wife to London for medical treatment. During my stay there the King came to London for official talks and so I went to pay him a visit at the Dorchester

Hotel. As the King was not there I left a word with his chief of protocol, Yanal Hikmat, about my presence in the country.

Upon his return to the hotel King Hussein promptly called me for a meeting with him. We chatted for some time and he gave me a large sum of money to cover the expenses of my wife's medical treatment.

When a veteran army officer died leaving behind a wife and a sick child, King Hussein took care of the family by covering their living expenses and the treatment of their child abroad until he became fit to support the family.

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King Hussein Ben Talal (directly behind girl in front) stands among his schoolmates at the CMS school in 1941 (photo supplied by Fawaz Al Khreisha)

ment and later returned to continue his service in Jordan.

As King he proved himself to be totally dedicated to serving humanitarian causes and helping towards solving issues at the Arab, Islamic and international levels. King Hussein is well-known to be a true believer in and intent on contributing to and endeavouring for the construction of a just and lasting peace everywhere in the world. He also believes in pluralism, democracy and seeking a better life for his people.

In the meantime, he continued supervising rescue operations in the Sweileh area.

King Hussein took good care of his soldiers and officers. One of these officers, Abdullah Rousan, was badly wounded in a land mine explosion near the border with Israel and was being treated at Marka military hospital. The King, who was visiting the hospital at the time, learned of the incident and ordered that the man be flown to Britain where he received proper treatment.

Jordanians' love for the King did not only stem from their admiration of his achievements but rather for his leader-

ship in the creation of the modern state of Jordan despite the country's meagre resources.

He transformed his country from a poor, backward state into a modern nation abounding with all manifestations of modern life.

To Hussein, the King, wise leader and man of courage, I send my congratulations and good wishes on his 60th birthday.

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'A major force for moderation in a region steeped in immoderation'

Images of King Hussein in the Western press

By Haya Husseini
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE WESTERN media over the years have hardly had an objective or well-balanced view of Arab political events. Over the long years they have done well in creating images of the stereotype, images that reflect a superficial understanding of the underlying causes of certain political steps adopted by leading figures in the Arab World, images that reinforce their Western notions of political justice, their notions of Western lives lived and acted out according to their sense of reasoned logic.

Where monarchy and absolute rule are concerned, the Western press has often lashed out at Arab leaders whose political careers constitute little more than the protection of their self-interests, their thrones and the assurance of the continuity of their rule.

In the case of Jordan, which only until recently and for obvious reasons, had seen little press attention, evaluations of its political nature had rarely been harsh.

There were the Gulf war years, of course, when Jordan refused to support the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq. During that period, the press mercilessly attacked His Majesty King Hussein's perceived hesitation to effectively apply the sanctions against Iraq.

For the Western press during the Gulf war, this was no time to consider the economic hardships Jordan would have experienced as a result of the blockade. To them, it was inconceivable that an Arab king was simply not bowing to a Western agenda.

In spite of that, or perhaps because of it, the King has been widely recognised as having done the best in a situation which was never very good, from the creation of Jordan by Winston Churchill "one Sunday afternoon," (Lawrence Tal, Foreign Affairs Nov/Dec. 93) to being king of a country considered by some as a "makeshift answer to an awkward problem; the car-up by foreigners of conquered soil" (Veronica Maclean, The Daily Express Feb. 93) and finally to having acquired, by the Western press' own admission, "a credibility and a stature that have allowed him to become a major force for moderation in a region steeped in immoderation." (John Newhouse, The New Yorker, 1983).

In a comprehensive profile written on the King, John Newhouse reviewed the history of King Hussein's reign. Based partially upon personal interviews, the article derives its impressions from historical events as well as from the King's own assessment and reflections on these events.

"King Hussein's experience and his generally sensible management of Jordan's affairs has strengthened him, but his role is a lonely and difficult one," wrote Newhouse in 1983.

Newhouse recognised the King's unique position in reigning over a country that was geographically central within a region beset by political conflict. Moreover, in 1952 when the young prince was declared King of Jordan, Newhouse said "the king and the country were alike—young, inexperienced, and unpromising. The prospects for the survival of either, given Jordan's poverty and the size and unfriendliness of various neighbouring states, weren't good."

But intimidation as a result of these factors did not seem to be on King Hussein's mind. Newhouse stated: "He has a natural confidence in himself—a quality that (the late King)

Abdullah also possessed—and this has always been an asset."

The survivor King

John Newhouse's article followed the political history of Jordan in the early 60s through to the 80s. In it he recalled the series of events that documented the King's capacity to survive "against the odds." He commented: "The King managed so far to survive the singular weaknesses and vulnerabilities of his realm and a procession of political crises, conspiracies and attempts on his life that these have inspired." (The New Yorker 1983)

Other Western print media, such as Robert Fisk's article in the Independent in 1993 on an informal gathering, with a post-operational King, found the monarch "not a frail man" but "aware of his mortality... (with) nothing to lose by speaking his mind in public."

When pitted against other Arab leaders, Western reporters saw the King as something entirely different. Fisk said: "he remains the only Middle Eastern leader in half a century to relinquish claims to Arab lands rather than demand more."

In much the same vein, David Hirst, writing for the Guardian in 1994, said: "the King is 'an exception to the rule... in a region where leaders have sunk to such low esteem in the eyes of the led.'

The Gulf war image

The pressure was on King Hussein to comply with U.S. orders to block trade with Iraq. The Western press saw the King's legitimate worries as more of a diplomatic effort to reach a balance between conflicting domestic and international policies.

Nora Boustany of the Washington Post reported in August 1990: "Though he has spoken plainly against foreign domination of the Arab world... (King) Hussein will find himself torn between domestic political pressures and his country's traditional role as a trusted friend and ally of the West in the Middle East."

The Washington Post's editorial in August of 1990 expressed anger at the King's concerns over the trade blockade with Iraq, and saw its own government's worded reaction to meetings with King Hussein as a mere "gloss" over the U.S.'s frustrations in making the King comply with the border sanctions:

"The gloss provided later by President Bush and other American officials, however, was to the effect that the Jordanian monarch had "reiterated" a decision already made to join the embargo," the editorial said.

The press was not convinced. The Washington Post editorial continued: "The King's large and evident mili-

tary and economic vulnerability and his aroused Palestinian majority push him very strongly to accept Iraq's conquest. Arab moderates and his Western friends are pulling the King the other way. Mr. Bush pronounced himself 'not satisfied' but 'encouraged' at the royal progress."

Adamant in their stand for the full application of sanctions and revering them as the only effective way to bring Iraq down on its knees, the Western press was vindictive in its reaction towards the Arab World.

The Western press did what it did best, drawing upon stereotypical images of the region, in a familiar rhetoric conceived out of its imperialist past and its historical biases: "These are nations built on sand and rhetoric—and both can shift when the next wind changes." (Richard Cohen, Washington Post, 1990).

Diplomacy and crisis

The turmoil of the Gulf War over, and the sanctions against Iraq proving themselves to be of primary harm to an innocent population, the Western press' hostility towards the King and this region softened.

When the King was not in favour over his refusal to support the war against Iraq, Anton La Guardia, writing in the Daily Telegraph, Nov. 92, used an interesting choice of words to describe the situation: "He (the King) has recently weathered Western anger," the word "weathered" bearing the semantics of strength, tenacity, a commitment to principles.

The same writer recognised that King Hussein "has led Jordan through traumatic times."

A Financial Times article by David Gardner and Julian Ozanne headlined "Court of the Chameleons" (Oct. 95) and sub-headlined: "A king who must



The young King receives ambassadors in 1954 (photo supplied by Fawaz Al Khreisha)

Ian Black of the Guardian.

King

As a young monarch, King Hussein was given the nickname PLK (Plucky Little King), an endearment by Westerners, during the early years of his reign. Nowadays, the initials are more likely to stand for Polite Like the King.

Jordan's experiment with democracy is as much a prescription for local social, economic and political woes as it is for the region:

"Long viewed by his rivals and peers in the Middle East as a political chameleons, the King — at the head of

is that important. If there is something that has upset me, something that I have lived with, it is this concept that a country starts and ends with an individual." (Ian Black, the Guardian Nov. 92).

The King is quoted as saying:

"There is one thing that I want to concentrate on. That is to ensure that this country is not known in the future as a country that began with me and ended with me. I want to consolidate the foundations for it to continue (by) giving people the right to rule them-

King's pursuit of contact and dialogue between warring factions.

As far back as 1983, in the New Yorker's profile on the King, Newhouse stated: "Proximity has obliged Hussein to be realistic about Israel."

Jordan's experiment with democracy is as much a prescription for local social, economic and political woes as it is for the region:

"Long viewed by his rivals and peers in the Middle East as a political chameleons, the King — at the head of

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SECTION TWO

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Britain's most popular living artist interviewed and what Conran and Quant think of him

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A man of courage and vision. He lived as a soldier and died as a soldier of peace



The King waves to a crowd of Armed Forces personnel in 1971 (photo supplied by Fawaz Al Khreisha)

decide like Solomon" described the King as "a regional powerbroker"—largely due to the King's call for political change in Iraq.

"Is Jordan doomed?" Foreign Affairs magazine asked in Nov/Dec. 93, just after the PLO-Israel self-rule agreement.

The writer, Lawrence Tal, said: "The foundations of the Jordanian state may be wobbling, but they have held."

On the same subject, David Hirst wrote in an article headlined: "A canny king turns the tables and is crowned again" that "even the most recalcitrant of his subjects, the dwellers, have come to acknowledge that he embodies a relatively benign, sagacious form of autocracy, and that he is the main asset of the regime he heads." (The Guardian Oct. 94).

Dynasty and democracy

The King has expressed his personal opinion to the Western press regarding a widespread view of a monarchy which he disagrees with:

"It was never my idea that an individual

decides for the monarchy to be just the symbol and the unifying factor." (Chris Dickey in Newsweek Oct. 92).

It seemed like a call for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy.

A month later, Hugh Carnegy and Mark Nicholson in the Financial Times wrote: "King Hussein says he is leading Jordan towards a constitutional monarchy, with greater emphasis than before on the constitution." (Financial Times Nov. 92).

Other newspapers have preferred to consider the King's experiment with democracy as a means to ensure the survival of monarchy:

"But the experiment (of democracy) continues if only because it may be the sole way Hussein can keep his Hashemite dynasty in place." (Newsweek Nov. 92).

Also in Newsweek (Oct. 94): "He's always been a shrewd and cautious politician, but family honour and obstinate colour every move he makes."

"Today Hussein is riding high—the honour of his family publicly restored, his night turned to day by the stroke of a pen on a treaty with Israel." (Christopher Dickey, Newsweek, Oct. 94).

The politics of pragmatism

The politics of pragmatism resides in the transparency of intentions, the full drive of action as well as the

a buffer state that has been buffeted since its birth—is now prescribing a possible future for Saddam Hussein's Iraq. And just as irritating to Arab dictators and absolute monarchs, he is offering the democratic experience of Jordan as a model for the region. He is courteous to a fault, as ever; but he has stopped mincing words." (David Gardner and Julian Ozanne, Financial Times, Nov. 92).

The complexity of regional politics has meant that it has been difficult for Jordan to take absolutely clear-cut decisions over what is best for it and the region.

But when it comes to the crunch, it seems the King has been able to make up his mind and move ahead swiftly without looking back.

In 1992, King Hussein told the Financial Times:

"When we chose to move (towards peace with Israel), the way forward was direct negotiations, and direct negotiations at the highest level."

The King's call for negotiations on Iraq, for dialogue and for solutions, has been recorded as part of his vision of democracy and pragmatism.

On Iraq, the Financial Times writers quoted the King: "what we need in Iraq must be for us to get credible representatives of the three major components of Iraq's people (to get them) somewhere to sit together and work out a national reconciliation between themselves, and to remove this spectre of a bloodbath all Iraqis are afraid of."

In the King's own words about his people, in Gardner and Ozanne's article in the Financial Times: "The people of Jordan are far more mature than some of the people involved in politics."

Democracy or diplomacy?

Pragmatism. By now, King Hussein's "hallmark" according to

Western press, in their generally competitive and aggressive ways, are not often the target of respect on their home turf.

Consequently, the "sirs" that dot the King's speech are not omitted: "Whenever I feel it is time for a change, sir, (the King told Chris Dickey of Newsweek Nov. 92 when asked if he was about to abdicate), "I'll be the first to let everyone know about it."

"Hussein has the gift of putting people at their ease, of making it seem you are the one person in the world with whom he wishes to converse." (Veronica Maclean, the Daily Express 93).

On the King's image, Maclean wrote: "It is immediately apparent that he is still a soldier, a leader, and that behind the charm lies the strength of instinctive authority, born perhaps of heredity and a long line of autocratic kings."

Though King Hussein may sometimes adopt a "diplomatic veneer" (Financial Times June 1994) when referring to sensitive issues, the Western press has come to attribute an "expected frankness" (Financial Times 1992) to his manner of speech. And this has held. A front page headline across eight columns of the Independent (Nov. 1995) carried the King's words, taken from his speech during Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's funeral: "A man of courage and vision. He lived as a soldier and died as a soldier of peace."

Two years ago, after dinner with King Hussein, a quiet dialogue over his health, the PLO-Israeli accords, elections in the country and the impact of the Gulf war on the country... Robert Fisk of the Independent wrote: "No more the PLK, he was a long period of debate and soul searching, against Iraq we

A minor miracle in the socio-economic structure of Jordan

By Fahed Al Fanek

IT IS generally said that His Majesty King Hussein derives his legitimacy as a leader from historical, religious, and constitutional realities. It is only fair to add his achievements as an additional source of legitimacy for this legendary monarch.

Jordan has undergone many changes since King Hussein assumed his constitutional powers in 1953. Aspects of the social and economic developments Jordan has witnessed over the past 42 years of his reign, are in order at the juncture of his 60th birthday.

A comparison of figures related to Jordan of 1952 and Jordan of 1995 may seem impossible to imagine as those pertaining to the same country. The changes are tremendous considering they took place during less than two generations.

What could be said is that a minor miracle has happened in the socio-economic structure of this country. Only figures can show the extent of this minor miracle and tell the story in a few words.

In 1952, the population of Jordan (East Bank) was just 587,193. Since then, the figure has increased seven-fold to reach 4.2 million in 1995, marking an annual growth rate of 4.68 per cent, one of the highest in the world.

The influx of displaced Palestinians was responsible for roughly one-third of the growth, while two-thirds represent natural growth.

The number of school teachers in 1952 was a mere 379; there were 29,981 students that same year. The number of students today is close to 1.35 million, almost one-third of the population, or 45 times the figure of 1952, an incredible compound growth of 9.3 per cent per annum. Enrolment rate now stands at 100 per cent.

The number of teachers has reached

57,000 or 150 times more than in 1952. The growth rates are 12.3 per cent a year.

Universities were non-existent until 1962 when the first such institutions were opened. Jordan now has five public and 12 private universities, with over 62,000 students, over and above Jordanian students pursuing their higher studies abroad.

Jordan now enjoys the highest rate of university graduates after the United States and Sweden.

In 1952, the number of practising medical doctors in the country, working for the public and private sectors was 72, of which 40 were in Amman, 15 in Irbid, six in Salt, five in Karak, three in Ajloun, and one in each of Tafleah, Ma'an, and Aqaba. Other medical professionals included 17 dentists, 49 pharmacists and 77 nurses.

In mid-1995, there was a count of 11,659 doctors made, covering all fields of medicines, as well as 2,695 dentists, 3,794 pharmacists, 4,950 nurses, including 770 midwives.

An annual growth rates of those professionals were impressive: 12.3 per cent, 12.5 per cent, 10.6 per cent, and 10.2 per cent respectively. Needless to say that the above figures indicate a social revolution.

Before we delve into monetary comparisons, we have to take into account that the level of prices in Jordan during mid-1995 were 917 per cent of the 1952 level, or a doubling of prices by nine times. The average compound inflation rate over 43 years is thus 5.3 per cent a year.

No statistics of gross national product were available in 1952, but gross domestic product (GDP) then could be estimated at JD 35 million, a per capita income of around JD 60.

GDP is expected to top JD 4,726 million in 1995, or 135 times more than in 1952, an annual growth rate of 12.1 per cent in nominal value. In spite of the rapid growth of population, per

capita income is currently estimated at JD 1,125 or 18.7 times higher than it was 43 years ago, marking an annual growth rate of 7.1 per cent.

The above will work out into an economic real growth rate of 6.4 per cent a year, and a persistent improvement in the standard of living averaging 1.7 per cent a year.

As far as foreign trade is concerned, imports in 1952 stood at JD 14.2 million, while exports were only JD 1.28 million. The value of re-exports amounted to JD 0.25 million, giving rise to a trade deficit of JD 12.7 million. Since then imports rose 186 times, including changes in prices, a nominal growth rate of 12.9 per cent or 7.2 per cent a year in real terms.

Exports, including re-exports, rose 778 times, an annual growth rate of 16.7 per cent or 10.8 per cent in real terms.

Looking at the balance of payments for the year 1952, we find that total receipts of the country in foreign exchange reached £10.2 million including £3.36 as the British subsidy to the army's budget.

One dinar was equal to one sterling pound at the time. Total receipts in 1995 are expected to top \$5.6 billion, 390 times those of 1952, showing an annual growth rate of 14.9 per cent or 9.1 per cent in real terms.

Currency in circulation was at the time JD 8.76 million. It has now jumped 134 times to JD 1,175 million, a nominal growth rate of 12.1 per cent or 6.5 per cent in real terms.

In the meantime, the total assets of the Jordanian banking system have risen from JD 15.6 million to the present JD 8.1 billion i.e. 520 times, an average growth rate of 15.6 per cent or 9.8 per cent in real terms. Banking credit facilities have risen at the same time from JD 6.9 million to JD 3.5 billion, over 500 times, or a nominal growth rate of 15.6 per cent a year, or 9.8 per cent in real terms.



The number of students today is close to 1.35 million; in 1952 the number was 29,981 (file photo)

owned by a total of 485 partners and shareholders.

The capitalisation of the Amman Financial Market nowadays is JD 2.3 billion, or 167 times larger, showing an annual growth rate of 12.6 per cent.

The prevailing level of wages for non-skilled labourers was 222 fils a day in Amman, 184 fils in Irbid. The average daily wages for agricultural labourers were 182 fils in ordinary times, rising to 229 fils a day during the season.

Those who now earn 23 times the above average of 227 per cent in real terms are considered to be living

below the poverty line.

In 1952 Jordan was among the most backward countries in the Arab World, with a largely bedouin society. Jordan now is one of the most advanced countries in the Middle East region, and a leader among Arabs in the quest for human rights, pluralism, democracy and prosperity.

Dr. Fahed Al Fanek is columnist for *Al Ra'i* and the *Jordan Times*. He is the publisher of a monthly newsletter which is concerned with Jordanian economic affairs and contributes views to other publications.

By Musa Braizat

THE FOLLOWING article is reprinted in excerpts from Dr. Braizat's recent book "Jordan's Diplomacy: Balancing National Survival" published by the Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, 1995. The excerpts have been edited for publication purposes in this supplement.

THE TYPE of inter-Arab politics through which Jordan is pursuing its national agenda is antithetical to change, inhospitable to wider and meaningful cooperation, and inimical to democracy.

But the Jordanian leadership has persisted. It has pursued a two-pronged strategy.

On the one hand, the Jordanian leadership—mainly His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan—realised that they could not ignore the prevailing realities pertaining to the existing balance of power within the Arab World, the vindictive mood towards Jordan in particular in certain Gulf states, Egypt's divisive role, and Syria's tendency to continually manoeuvre between rival alliances within inter-Arab politics, avoiding any entanglement with any side.

At the same time, the King was not willing to succumb to the dictates of the "victors" in the Gulf war, the benefactors of the status quo. Therefore, a tedious and complex process of adaptation and adjustment in Jordan's foreign behaviour began immediately on the eve of the cessation of hostilities against Iraq in February 1991.

The theme of the new phase of Jordan's regional diplomacy was a familiar one: Arab reconciliation and renewed inter-Arab understanding.

Yet after some initial difficulty, King Hussein charted out a distinct Jordanian approach at the level of inter-Arab politics. This approach, as mentioned earlier, neither endorses the untenable status quo nor does it seek to change it violently.

Within the parameters of this approach Jordanian officials toned down their pan-Arab rhetoric, and simultaneously acknowledged the validity of some of existing realities.

Among those realities which Jordan began to reckon with was that "state-nationalism," as opposed to

Jordan's regional diplomacy

complied with. But only after there was no alternative. Going along with the sanctions was a difficult decision to take for the Jordanians. More than 60 per cent of Jordan's trade was with Iraq, and Iraq has been the only available source of oil after the Gulf states cut their oil supplies to Jordan. In addition, adhering fully to the sanctions has posed moral and political problems.

In its new path Jordan tried to steer away from the killing ground between the two bitter axes within the Arab arena that have ensued

higher Arab nationalism, was indeed stronger than its opponents would have liked it to be.

In a speech on May 22, 1991 at the War College, King Hussein admitted that the Gulf crisis represented a new phenomenon which raises questions over the future of the Arab nation.

The war, he said, changed the nature of Arab politics. Prior to the Gulf war all Arab regimes were usually attentive to the collective interests of the Arab peoples and countries and sought to harness their respective national policies with the

from the oil boom of the 1970s came to an end, Jordan began to experience signs of economic strain.

Economic retreat reached its peak in 1988 when the country's reserves of foreign currency dwindled drastically. The Jordanian dinar was devalued and tough economic policies were adopted. Riots erupted, mostly in the south, in protest against the then Prime Minister Zaid Rifai's economic policies.

Since then, several tough economic measures have been put in place, including an International Monetary

lion annually to service it. The amount due in 1990-93 was \$1.6 billion. The burden of debt creates troublesome problems for Jordan's economy.

Debt repayment accounts for 25 per cent of current spending and it complicates the government's efforts to deal with rising unemployment, increasing poverty and a sharp drop in living standards. But the success of the economic adjustment programme and Jordan's exemplary economic recovery paved the way for rescheduling arrangements between the internal and external imbalances, ease the problem of poverty, reduce foreign debt, and instill confidence in the national economy.

The results of the econo-

makeup. But only after there was no alternative. Going along with the sanctions was a difficult decision to take for the Jordanians. More than 60 per cent of Jordan's trade was with Iraq, and Iraq has been the only available source of oil after the Gulf states cut their oil supplies to Jordan. In addition, adhering fully to the sanctions has posed moral and political problems.

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economic measures have been put in place, including an International Monetary

Fund (IMF) economic restructuring programme.

But the consolidation of state nationalism within the Arab regime order was not the only lesson Jordan drew from the Gulf war and sought to reckon with.

Jordanian leaders were quick to admit the constraining factors emanating from the international environment on anti-status quo powers. The international system is premised on the preservation of the status quo and would not tolerate efforts by any power seeking to wreak havoc with this fundamental principle.

In a departure from previous criticism of the League of Arab States and the United Nations, which, in Jordanian eyes, had been used simply as tools to legitimate the U.S.-led onslaught against Iraq, Jordanians recognised the role that these organisations play within the regional as well as international order.

Economic policies

because of the Gulf war. The Jordanian message may not have been loud enough but it was clear: the status quo is unacceptable, as well as Iraq's remedy of it.

In rhetoric and action, Jordan has adopted a unique approach, a third option, if you wish. This independent outlook has evolved over time and in a form of trial and error, as it is never easy to present a third way in a deeply polarised situation such as the one that resulted from the Gulf war within the Arab domain.

Yet after some initial difficulty, King Hussein charted out a distinct Jordanian approach at the level of inter-Arab politics. This approach, as mentioned earlier, neither endorses the untenable status quo nor does it seek to change it violently.

Within the parameters of this approach Jordanian officials toned down their pan-Arab rhetoric, and simultaneously acknowledged the validity of some of existing realities.

Among those realities which Jordan began to reckon with was that "state-nationalism," as opposed to

ic adjustment programme are mixed. But the overall performance of the economy has improved. The areas where progress has been more visible include the balance of payment and current account, government budget, exports, low inflation and GDP growth.

But such positive results are not attributable only to the adjustment programme. Other factors contributed to these results, mainly generous foreign aid in the form of grants from Germany and soft loans from Japan as well as those portions of the returns' savings in foreign exchange.

One should not, however, ignore the adverse effects of the programme on the people as it did increase hardship for the middle class and the least privileged.

Still, the economic restructuring plan and the agreement with the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank) to this effect enabled Jordan to negotiate successfully its debt problems with the creditor nations.

This is without mentioning the impact this extraordinary large number of people had on the demographic balance of the country.

Some suggested that Jordan might not survive the challenge, economically. But forecasts of imminent economic collapse because of the Gulf crisis proved to be incorrect.

Jordan managed to tackle

Another topic which is relevant to Jordan's regional behaviour is the country's economy. As the financial windfall which accrued

to the economy.

The results of the econo-

A Himalayan tribute to His Majesty

By Rajan Thonipurakal

AN OUTSTANDING feature of the 20th century is the increase in religious and political extremism. An act of fanaticism in any corner of the world is usually blown up out of all proportion and circulated widely in the media.

Unfortunately, the unknown peace warriors are always neglected and the media is not giving them the prominence they deserve.

So on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, it is only appropriate to highlight the noble deeds of this great man who inspires others to work for the welfare of humanity.

"The evil that men do lives after them."

The good is oft interred with their bones" (Julius Caesar—Shakespeare)

As deeds speak for themselves, I would only like to highlight some important actions of King Hussein in the recent past.

To start with the most recent, the MENA summit, is to show just another feat of King Hussein's international diplomacy.

The rift in the Arab ranks, wrought by the Gulf crisis, still clouds the Arab circle, but the tremendous showing of Arab participants in the MENA summit was a clear signal that there will be unity, stability and security in this part of the world.

The presence of Kuwaiti and Saudi delegations at the Amman summit was another example of the King's pivotal role in unifying Arab ranks.

If we examine the conflict spots in the world—Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Rwanda and other hot spots—we find Jordanian peacekeepers are spreading the peaceful message of Jordan and consequently enhancing the international prestige of the country and of the longest surviving head of state in the world.

During the last wave of refugees after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the King did all he could to offer refuge to all, irrespective of nationality. No refugee will forget His Majesty's or Jordan's hospitality.

By keeping open the borders with Iraq—it's only outlet to the world—His Majesty won the hearts

of the Iraqis. For sure, they will never forget this noble gesture.

The King received hundreds of Bosnians and offered them safe haven despite Jordan's meagre resources. This was also a gesture of which other countries must take note.

During the Yemeni civil war, all other Arab leaders were trying to compound the situation while King Hussein did his utmost to bring about reconciliation.

Jordanians and people of other nationalities stranded in the midst of the conflict must have surely appreciated the King sending the Royal Jordanian airlines to their rescue.

The recent expulsion of Palestinians from Libya sent shock waves across the region. A group of Jordanians was stranded aboard a ferry in Cyprus for several days appealing for mercy. His Majesty intervened and sent an RJ airline to evacuate them.

In a related incident, Jordanian landowners on whose land refugee camps are situated, recently announced their intention to sell their properties, which

Jordan celebrates King's 60th birthday

(Continued from page 1)

from all corners of the globe are enough testimony of His

Majesty's achievements since he inherited the throne at the age of 17 and guided the country through some of the

worst turbulences that any country or region could witness and survive to tell the story.

Jordan, Bahrain pledge close ties

(Continued from page 1)

on bilateral cooperation in economic, information, cultural and security affairs.

The communiqué said the talks resulted in agreement on the following:

1. Supporting bilateral cooperation in strategic security for the two countries and the Arab World at large.

2. Pledging to take appropriate steps to contain all manifestations of extremism and fight all forms of violence and acts of terrorism which harm stability and development. In this respect the two sides strongly condemn the car-bomb explosion which occurred in Riyadh Monday as a terrorist attack and express solidarity with Saudi Arabia.

and all other Arab states in fighting such terrorist actions.

3. The two sides studied ways for developing their economic cooperation and decided to re-activate and stimulate their cooperation in financial and economic matters as well as tourism and trade, and to upgrade cooperation between the two countries' economic organisations.

4. The two sides agreed to upgrade their cooperation in cultural and informational fields and to initiate cultural weeks which entail exchanges of information messages and other material and holding seminars and intensify cultural activities.

The Crown Prince, accompanied by Sharif Janil Ben Nasser, Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kharriti and other officials, returned to Amman Monday evening and were met at the airport by Deputy Prime Minister Khaled Karaki, senior officials and high-ranking army officers.

The two sides also agreed to pursue their meetings and contacts at all levels to ensure

Israel evacuates Jenin

(Continued from page 1)

Ramallah, north of Jerusalem, and the area around Hebron between Dec. 30 and 31. Under special arrangements, soldiers will stay in the centre of Hebron to protect 400 settlers living there among 120,000 Palestinians.

In Cairo, Mr. Arafat praised the Israeli pullout from Jenin.

"It is positive," Mr. Arafat told the press as he ended a two-day session of the PLO's Executive Committee in Cairo.

Palestinian Culture Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said

the implementation of these agreements.

Sheikh Hamad, the heir apparent, expressed his delight at the Crown Prince's visit to Bahrain and his satisfaction with the fruitful results of the visit.

Prince Hassam voiced deep appreciation of the hospitality accorded to him and the Jordanian delegation and expressed hope for similar meetings in the future.

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the first since Mr. Rabin was killed.

It decided to create a commission headed by Mr. Arafat to "supervise the national dialogue and guarantee the participation of most Palestinian political parties," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

The Executive Committee also condemned the assassination of Mr. Rabin on Nov. 4 as a "criminal act which aimed to eliminate the peace process," reaffirming its commitment to "continue the peace process."

The PLO session, attended by 13 of its 18 members, was

Bomb in Riyadh Kills 5

(Continued from page 1)

Police, firefighters, ambulances all rushed to the scene where they put out the fire and pulled victims from the rubble, mainly American women.

Two of the dead were seen later covered with blankets.

Saudi and U.S. officials were seen picking up fragments of a splintered car.

Saudi officials sealed off the area to the public.

Around 200 people, mainly Americans but also Filipinos and Indians, worked in the offices, an employee said.

The U.S. ambassador said he and U.S. Army Brigadier General Larry Smith, the head of the programme to train the Saudi National Guard, met with Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, the head of the Saudi National Guard.

The United States signed an accord in 1973 to train and equip the Saudi National

Guard. The programme was described by the embassy as "a longstanding U.S. army security assistance programme."

Independent of the Ministry of Defence, the National Guard is tasked with ensuring internal security such as the protection of oil terminals, electrical power stations, and water desalination plants.

It fought in the 1991 Gulf war.

In the build-up to the U.S.-led war to free Kuwait in 1991, some Saudis distributed cassettes and made calls from the mosques demanding the expulsion of American troops.

More than 500,000 U.S. troops were based in Saudi Arabia before the war was launched in January 1991.

The bombed building is in a plush business district where many fashionable shops, banks and business offices are situated.

Witnesses said at least 30 cars were charred or wrecked by the blast. Nearby streets were littered with shattered glass from buildings and shop windows.

Surrounding buildings were badly damaged, with the front wall of one almost totally destroyed.

Bystanders helped to load bleeding casualties into cars to be taken to hospitals as ambulances raced to the scene.

"We are seeing a lot of burns," a hospital worker said.

Security forces quickly sealed off the streets.

Witnesses said the blast was huge and was felt across the city. "It was like an earthquake," one Riyadh resident said.

Several embassies in the kingdom stepped up security following the attack. Cars entering Riyadh's diplomatic area were searched.

comes immediately after, hopefully, the establishment of the new government and that peace with Syria will be one of the first priorities of the new government."

Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlas said Sunday Syria will not accept early warning stations on the Golan Heights even if this contributes to a collapse in the peace process.

"If they (Israelis) think of a warning system on the ground, this question is non-negotiable even if the peace process collapses," General Tlas told students graduating at the women's military college in Damascus.

"We do not want to get rid of occupation, only to come under another occupation, as we refuse to have a permanent symbol of occupation on our land," he said.

Having taken the heights, Mr. Rabin was seen as the only Israeli politician with the security credentials that would convince Israelis to hand them back in return for peace, open borders, trade and diplomatic relations.

"I believe that it would be a great mistake for all of us if we miss the boat between Israel and Syria," Mr. Beilin said.

"The price should be negotiated between us and the Syrians, preferably directly. But if the Syrians would not like to negotiate with us directly on the high political level we are also ready for the continuation of the shuttle diplomacy of the United States. And I believe that if the Syrians are serious they will find in Israel a very, very serious partner," Mr. Beilin said.

President and members of Jordan Cultural Forum convey to His Majesty the King their sincere congratulations on the occasion of his 60th birthday.

May the Almighty God keep

His Majesty King Hussein

a symbol of peace, responsible democracy and a leader of the Arabian renaissance.

THE ECONOMIC PRESS
GEORGE ZO'MOT & SONS

Jordan Cultural Forum

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(Continued from page 12)

the debate will be to the point, legitimate," Mr. Netanyahu told Israel Radio.

"We agree, the two of us, that each of us would work so that the political dialogue will be conducted in this spirit in the Knesset and out," he said.

"I believe we must work fully, and so I told Mr. Peres, within the full authority of the law, against that tiny minority that supports violence and murder," he said.

"There isn't a person in Israel who doesn't think more could have been done. On the right and the left, I believe we must work to bring the internal reality in Israel to another course, to a course of greater tolerance, greater understanding within a debate to the point with mutual respect."

Israeli Cabinet Minister Yossi Beilin said meanwhile that Syria's muted reaction to the assassination of Mr. Rabin was "worrying."

But Mr. Beilin, a strong supporter of Middle East peacemaking and a close political ally of Mr. Peres, said Israel wanted a deal with Damascus.

"I must admit that the reactions from Damascus are worrying. I mean the human reaction, the spontaneous one to say, 'we are sorry for the death of your prime minister even if we don't have peace with you or whatever.' This did not take place, and I wonder why," Mr. Beilin told Reuters.

Mr. Beilin said the new government, which Mr. Peres is expected to form shortly, would forge ahead with Mr. Rabin's efforts to secure a treaty with Syria and Lebanon, the last holdouts against making peace with their Jewish neighbour.

"The most important thing about Dennis's visit is that he

can make peace. The

Commonwealth starts new debate on democracy

By Alan Wheatley

Reuter

AUCKLAND — By its tough action in suspending Nigeria for human rights abuses, the Commonwealth has given itself a new lease on life and immensely enhanced its credibility as a guardian of democracy.

But in passing what British Prime Minister John Major called an acid test, it may also have sown the seeds of future strain in a club whose members have more than one yardstick for judging what passes for democracy.

Commonwealth leaders came to Auckland for their biennial summit with the task of giving teeth to a commitment to good government that they made four years earlier in Harare.

Cynics were silenced

when the leaders, with a decisiveness rare in an international organisation, suspended Nigeria within hours of its execution of nine minority rights activists.

Moreover, they set up an eight-strong panel of foreign ministers to monitor implementation of the Harare declaration and sound the alarm if a country starts to veer off course.

"This meeting, I believe, is going to be one of the milestones on the journey that we are on... we begin a new Commonwealth," New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger, the host of the summit, told its final session on Monday.

Nigeria's provocation in carrying out the hangings on the first day of the summit swayed the Commonwealth

wealth to suspend it once South African President Nelson Mandela had put his considerable authority behind such a move.

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Algerian economy in transition, hit by violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian authorities hope that a political settlement to the country's civil war can emerge from next Thursday's presidential election to put the country's crisis-hit economy on the road to recovery.

A tough programme of reform to convert to a market economy after 30 years of state planning has the backing of international financial institutions but the bloody conflict between the military-backed government and Islamic radicals is deterring foreign investment.

Algeria is effectively bank-

rupt, hit since 1988 by a sharp fall in the price of oil which accounts for more than 95 per cent of its revenue in hard currency.

Last year it found itself unable to repay its sharp-term loans, but managed to secure a rescheduling of \$5.6 billion, more than a quarter of its total foreign debt.

The government also signed a stabilisation agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which exacted conditions for a \$1.2 billion loan, a halt to price subsidies, liberalisation of external trade, a sharp devaluation of the dinar.

curbs on the budget deficit and a privatisation programme.

The privatisation, in a country where unemployment has reached 25 per cent, has caused popular concern and has been condemned by the powerful CGTA trade union.

The state owns more than 400 companies, including 20 major industrial groups, and the sector is largely in the red, overmanned and with obsolete plant.

Over five years the government has ploughed in \$60 billion dinars (more than \$100 billion) but has failed to

prevent output falling. Production was down nine per cent in the first half of this year alone.

Last May, Algiers signed a new three-year accord with the IMF on access to funding, coupled with an additional loan of \$1.8 billion. But the agreement was based on a 5.3 per cent growth rate for the first year which experts said was over-optimistic.

A new rescheduling agreement covering debts of \$7.5 billion was also reached with creditor nations in the Club of Paris.

As the government revised

upwards its inflation forecast

for this year, from 13 per cent to 22 per cent, Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi admitted that the rescheduling could be a time-bomb if production continued to fall. The new crunch for repayments will come in 2000.

Algiers is still gambling on oil to get the economy moving again. The state petroleum company Sonatrach, whose sales abroad brought in \$8.6 billion last year, aims to boost output from 750,000 barrels a day to one million over the next five years.

The government also plans to reform the agricultural sector to cut its dependence on food imports, which total \$2.5 billion a year.

The authorities can take comfort from the blessings of international bodies. The World Bank has praised the government's management as the best for 20 years, while IMF head Michel Camdessus said he was perfectly satisfied with the way the structural adjustment programme was being applied.

But sabotage and civil unrest have caused an estimated \$2.2 billion damage, while a thriving black market is busily adapting itself to the end of the state monopoly on foreign trade.

The government also plans to reform the agricultural sector to cut its dependence on

Clinton vetoes debt ceiling bill

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton vetoed Monday an emergency bill to keep the federal government afloat after midnight, setting up a showdown with Congress in their bitter feud over how to balance the budget.

Mr. Clinton vetoed legislation to extend a cap on government borrowing and said he was sending his own version to Congress following a week-long war of nerves between the Democratic president and the Republican-controlled legislature.

Congress had moved to raise the debt ceiling from the current \$4.9 trillion and allow stopgap funding to keep the federal government from shutting down after midnight (0500 GMT Tuesday).

This could put 800,000 government employees out of a job, and result in the United States defaulting on its financial obligations for the first time in U.S. history, a prospect that has already made markets edgy.

But Mr. Clinton has opposed measures attached to the bills, including one provision that would raise premiums for federal health insurance for the elderly. He has accused the Republicans of using the federal government as a hostage to ram through their proposals.

Mr. Clinton vetoed the Republican debt ceiling bill early Monday and was to veto a separate stopgap funding measure later once it cleared the Senate as expected later in the day.

"America has never liked... pressure tactics," Mr. Clinton said as he signed the veto in the White House Oval Office. "I would be wrong to let these kinds of pressure tactics radically change the course of American life."

Mr. Clinton said the Republican legislation would have allowed the United

States to pay its debts for the next month "but only at a price too high for the American people to pay."

The president said the bill would actually increase the likelihood of an unprecedented U.S. government default on its obligations by taking away some of the emergency measures available to the treasury secretary.

He also said it would force through adoption of the Republican legislative programme including deep cuts in medical coverage for the elderly, education, technology and environmental protection programmes.

"This legislation is part of an overall back-door effort by the Republicans in Congress to impose their priorities on our nation," he said. "It is not good for America."

If the dispute is unresolved by Tuesday, most government employees would be furloughed with only those deemed essential, such as air traffic controllers and federal law enforcement officials, staying at their posts.

The Treasury Department is also facing \$24.8 billion in debt interest due Wednesday. Officials said they could probably shuffle some retirement funds to avoid an immediate default but would have problems over the long term.

The heart of the battle is a dispute over how to balance the federal budget. The Republicans are proposing deep cuts in social programmes to erase the deficit in seven years while Mr. Clinton favours a moderate approach over nine years.

Sheikh Matiri said he had "no objection to the participation of foreign investors in the oil industry," although he was opposed to their participation in oil production, except in small fields.

The feud reached a fevered pitch over the weekend as the two sides traded charges and danced around each other in efforts to set up negotiations in a bid to avert the widely feared federal "train wreck."

Late Sunday, Mr. Clinton

invited congressional members from both parties to the White House on Monday for negotiations on both bills, but refused to back down on his opposition to the provisions.

White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta said on U.S. television Sunday that there was "nothing for us to talk about" unless the Congress removed the unacceptable side-issues attached to the funding measures.

Senate Republican leader Bob Dole said members could pass legislation without attaching the conditions Mr. Clinton finds so unacceptable — but only if the president first agrees to their plan to balance budget in seven years.

But House Speaker Newt Gingrich said at a hastily arranged news conference — at which he formally signed the debt extension — that the legislation was about the best

time, however, the interruption could be more severe. Some agencies, such as the commerce and labour departments announced that they will not publish their normal reports if the shutdown comes.

Mr. Panetta indicated the crisis, which has already prompted Mr. Clinton to cancel a fundraising trip, could interfere with the president's trip this week to Japan.

"Initially, they are asking for 1,000 tractors, and 1,000 combines at a time. They would also like to manufacture 12,000 a year at home," Richard Humphries of the British company Massey Ferguson told Reuters.

Massey Ferguson, the world's largest manufacturer of agricultural machines and one of Iraq's largest supplier of tractors and harvesters, has brought two machines to the fair.

"Iraq has been a customer for 40 years," Mr. Humphries said. "Agricultural needs here are tremendous."

Officials said it was not difficult to obtain United Nations' permission to export the equipment to Iraq but the Iraqis were having insurmountable payment difficulties.

"They want the payment to

"Foreign investment accounted for \$1.2 billion of this project, which shows world confidence in the Kuwaiti economy," he said.

Hilal Matiri has said.

A bill was being drafted to reduce taxes by at least 30 per cent from the current 55 per cent imposed on the value of the items imported, he said. Kuwaiti and other Arab Gulf investors are exempt from such taxes.

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Late Sunday, Mr. Clinton

Kuwait to promote foreign investment

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait will seek to encourage foreign investment by cutting duty imposed on imports of equipment, Commerce and Industry Minister Hilal Matiri has said.

A bill was being drafted to reduce taxes by at least 30 per cent from the current 55 per cent imposed on the value of the items imported, he said.

Kuwaiti and other Arab Gulf investors are exempt from such taxes.

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Iraq needs tractors, no supplier found

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq wants to buy thousands of tractors and combine harvesters but U.N. sanctions make paying for them difficult.

U.N. sanctions, imposed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990, have blocked the country's oil exports and frozen billions of dollars worth of assets abroad.

Iraq has about 4,000 combines and tractors but officials say most of them were becoming idle due to lack of spare parts.

Massey Ferguson shipped more than 12,000 tractors to Iraq in the early 1980s. Mr. Humphries said. His company stopped trade with Iraq immediately after the sanctions but other countries were trying to dominate what once was a traditional British market.

It faces severe competition from firms from Russia, Algeria, Italy, and Ukraine which have agreed to deal with Iraq, albeit on a limited scale, under the embargo.

Brussels is planning to launch an advertising cam-

Bangemann says single currency good for German

BONN (R) — European Industry Commissioner Martin Bangemann, seeking to allay German fears about giving up the single currency, said he was perfectly satisfied with the way the structural adjustment programme was being applied.

But sabotage and civil unrest have caused an estimated \$2.2 billion damage, while a thriving black market is busily adapting itself to the end of the state monopoly on foreign trade.

The government also plans to reform the agricultural sector to cut its dependence on

"The Germans as holiday world champions would profit from this greatly," he said. "Companies would be able to reduce their costs sharply which will in particular benefit export-oriented companies."

Germany is one of the world's strongest exporting nations, selling goods and services equivalent to 30 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) abroad.

A row has raged in Germany in the last two weeks after senior opposition Social Democrats (SPD) said Germany should not unquestioningly surrender the mark. SPD leader Rudolf Scharping said the 1999 start date of economic and monetary union (EMU) should not be sacred.

He also called on Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government to answer Germans' questions about the effects of a single currency on their savings and pensions.

A recent newspaper poll found 61 per cent of Germans opposed to a single currency and 77 per cent said they were not sufficiently informed about it.

Brussels is planning to launch an advertising cam-

THE Daily Crossword by Grace C. Pinkston

ACROSS

1 Diner beverage

5 Uses the slopes

9 Former barber

13 Certain

decorator

14 Commandment

word

15 Exceeding

16 Sean Connery,

formerly

18 Judge

19 Conger

20 Alpine stream

21 Passageways

23 Cut

24 In the past

25 N.Y. island

28 Accounts

examiner

31 Nigenan port

32 Come Johnson

33 Polite address

35 Oil acronym

36 Attempted

37 — cost (gratis)

38 Give the eye

39 Audition

40 Trapshooting

41 Warren's

occupants

43 Sound system

44 Stratagem

45 Max or Buddy

46 Approach

49 Conferred

50 Xenon, e.g.

53 Onion kin

54 Clark Gable,

formerly

57 Punta del —

58 Swords

59 Jai —

Labour problems dog companies expanding in Asia

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Failure to get trained staff to suit their rapidly expanding operations in Asia poses the biggest risk to many companies operating in the region, a report received here today said.

The Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) said labour problems of one sort or another figured among complaints made by companies it surveyed.

"In some cases, it was a matter of high (labour) costs. In other cases it was a matter of movement of low skill levels. However, of goods and services," he said.

Germans fear currency would be strong and stable.

Deutsche Mark

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World Cup season begins slowly

TIGNES (R) — Switzerland's Michael Von Gruenigen had a perfect start to the Alpine skiing season when he won the opening giant slalom of the men's World Cup on a windy Tignes glacier on Sunday.

The 26-year-old Swiss, who is always at ease on French snow — he was second here last year and won in nearby Val d'Isere — beat Norwegian all-rounder Lasse Khus by a mere four hundredths of a second with a total time of two minutes 21.38 seconds.

Second-Swiss Urs Kaelin, the Olympic giant slalom silver medalist, was third on 2:21.38.

It was a sweet return for Von Gruenigen who suffered a collarbone injury last season after leading the field in the opening giant slaloms.

He had a nearly perfect run in the first leg, leaving Kaelin and Khus almost one second adrift.

His solid performance in the second leg was enough for him to beat Khus, who had twice in the past finished second in a giant slalom but has yet to win one in the World Cup.

The Norwegian, Olympic combined champion in Lillehammer, prevented Switzerland from achieving a clean sweep as another Swiss, Steve Locher, was fourth on 2:20.87.

But the most impressive



Martina Ertt of Germany in action during the women's World Cup giant slalom (Reuters photo)

display of aggressive skiing came unexpectedly from another Swiss, veteran Paul Accola, who had the fastest second-leg time and rose from 15th in the morning to take sixth place overall and confirm Switzerland's fine start to the season.

The 28-year-old Accola won the World Cup in 1992 but has failed to win a race since.

Von Gruenigen, who won World Cup giant slaloms in Veysonnaz in 1993 and Val d'Isere last year, took advantage of the absence of Italian superstar Alberto Tomba, who flew to California last week to prepare for the upcoming American races.

Austrian Guenther Mader was another leading absentee and his team mates hardly made up for his absence.

Three of the leading Austrian specialists, Mario Reiter, Christian Mayer and Richard Kroell, crashed out in the first leg.

Slovenian Jure Kosir, Tomba's main rival in technical events in recent years, also went out in the morning run.

Norway's Kjetil-André Aamodt, World Cup winner

in 1994, was disappointing with 11th place.

The race was run in windy conditions which led a lot of skiers to make mistakes at the top of the icy piste.

A women's giant slalom on Saturday was cancelled because of gusty winds.

Both men and women now travel to the U.S. for races in Vail, Colorado.

Metal detectors, restrictions, security awaiting spectators in Atlanta

ATLANTA (AP) — The 1996 Olympic may be remembered as the waiting game.

Most people coming to the Olympics already have had to wait for tickets, are probably waiting now to find a room and will have to wait next summer for buses to creep from Atlanta's perimeter to the Games in the heart of the city.

Even after getting through all that, another big wait is facing Olympic visitors. Ticket holders will have to pass through metal detectors and submit to a rummage of their personal bags before they can sit down and watch the events.

It's all in the name of security, which will be tighter at the Atlanta Olympics than at any previous games.

"People have to understand this will occur. It will delay them some amount of time," said Bill Rathburn, security chief for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. "If they want to be there at the beginning of the event, they have to get there in plenty of time — at least an hour before."

Since the 1984 Los Angeles Games — when spectators had to pass through metal detectors for the opening ceremony because U.S. President Ronald Reagan was in attendance, but otherwise entered venues unencumbered — the electronic security checkpoints have been an increasingly com-

mon sight at Olympics. In Atlanta, for the first time, metal detectors will be at every competition venue, Rathburn said.

"We will have literally hundreds of walk-through metal detectors. The key is having enough so that you can accommodate peak crowds."

ACOG says it has enough machines so that 500 people can move per hour through each checkpoint.

Also confronting spectators will be a long list of items prohibited from the venues for security reasons, ranging from bottles, cans and insulated food carriers to banners and baby strollers.

"It's not that we care about them bringing a picnic lunch, it's that we don't have the room to accommodate them," Rathburn said.

"We don't want people to take ice chests and stash them in the bushes either. That was a problem in '84," said Rathburn, who coordinated Olympic security for the Los Angeles Police Department in 1984.

"They didn't want to throw them away... then along... comes a security officer and discovers this suspicious item, carefully hidden away in the bushes. And then out comes the bomb squad, and we open another ice chest and we wasted a lot of time. It happened a lot."

Similar to last year's World Cup, as spectators approach the Olympic

Ireland's place in the last 16 in England next summer. But if Northern Ireland beat third-placed Austria in Belfast the same night, the Republic can still make it even if they lose their last qualifying match to the Portuguese.

It will be a slide-rule mathematician's delight on the night. Ireland, one point ahead of Austria, will win the group and qualify automatically if they beat Portugal.

But by finishing second with a result as good as or better than Austria achieve in Belfast, they are likely to face a play-off against the runners-up in one of the other eight groups at Liverpool on December 13.

McGrath is set to break Ireland's appearance record with his 79th cap in Lisbon and loss Charlton has already stated he will not disturb his usual back-four line-up in which Manchester United's Denis Irwin returns to replace Chelsea's new signing Terry Phelan.

McGrath said: "It will be a great honour to get the record and it will be even better if it coincides with us making sure of a place in the final."

Albridge, needing one goal to equal Frank Stapleton's Ireland record of 20, should line up alongside Manchester City's Niall Quinn at the front of a familiar 4-4-2 formation.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

'Nigeria not welcome at soccer tourney'

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa said on Monday it had withdrawn an invitation to Nigeria to take part in a four-round African soccer tournament next week. The sports ministry said the decision was taken after a meeting with SAFA (South African Football Association) and followed the move by the Commonwealth to suspend Nigeria over Friday's executions of nine human rights activists.

Busy weekend for Effenberg

BONN (AFP) — Stefan Effenberg, banned from playing for Germany after making obscene gestures during last year's World Cup, was involved in two fights over the weekend. The big midfielder first broke up a fight between Borussia Mönchengladbach team-mates and stewards at half-time in a Bundesliga match at Düsseldorf. Then he had to be held back by bouncers at a disco when he got into a fight with another customer.

Anyone who sets off the alarm will be taken out of line for further inspection, so the line doesn't get backed up, he added.

At some arenas, large video screens will be set up outside to make the wait more pleasant, said Dung Arnot, ACOG's managing director for venues. And live entertainment will be provided at the largest facilities, such as the main Olympic stadium.

Still, ACOG doesn't want a tailgate party atmosphere developing outside the events. People without tickets who just want to soak up the atmosphere will be steered toward the centennial Olympic park, Rathburn said.

"You can't hang out very close to the venue because of that perimeter fence," he said. "A lot of people will be hanging out at the park. I just don't think people will go to hang out around the venues."

Lessing wins triathlon title

CANCUN, Mexico (AFP) — Britain's Simon Lessing won the men's title and Karen Smiers of the United States the women's at the world triathlon championships. Lessing beat out the favourite, Pat Bevan of Australia, into second place with Ralf Eggert of Germany third. Smiers, who won the 1990 world title at Orlando, Florida, finished clear of Australian Jackie Gallacher and fellow American Joy Leutner.

Pakistan face tough squash challenge

CAIRO (R) — Seven-times world open champion Jansher Khan of Pakistan leads his country in defence of the world team squash title this week but organisers say they face an uphill battle against Australia and England. Pakistan, unhappy at their second seeding beneath former champions Australia, are due to play third-ranked England in the opening match of the 32-nation tournament. But the Egyptian hosts said neither team had submitted their order of play and it was not clear whether Jansher would face a rematch of his world open final defeat of England's Del Harris in Cyprus on Saturday.

Taylor future in doubt

LONDON (R) — Graham Taylor was facing a noon showdown on Monday after Wolves called a news conference to end speculation over the future of the troubled former England manager. Rumours are rife that the struggling first division club are ready to part company with their beleaguered boss. Wolves, beaten in the play-offs last season, were installed as first division promotion favourites at the start of the new campaign but have slumped to 18th in the table with just four wins from their first 16 league games. Even though they moved into the fourth round of the league cup last week, Sunday's goalless home draw with Charlton increased the heat on Taylor, with several hundred of supporters staging a post-match demonstration.

Dalian defeat leaders Shanghai

BEIJING (R) — Dalian Wanda beat China's professional league leaders Shanghai Shenhua by one goal to set a two-year winning streak on their home ground, the Xinhua news agency said. Dalian's Wei Yimin scored the only goal of the match in the 10th minute against Shanghai Shenhua, already sure of winning the league this season. Dalian are third in the league. In southern Guangzhou, Guangdong Hongyuan, who are second in the league ahead of Dalian Wanda by one point, tied 2-2 with visitors Jilin Hyundai by scoring twice in the last 18 minutes of the match.

Hakkinen out of intensive care

ADLAIDE (AFP) — Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen was Monday moved from the intensive care unit at Royal Adelaide Hospital as he continued his recovery from head injuries sustained in qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix, a spokesman said.

The Finnish driver was injured on Friday when he crashed his McLaren Mercedes into a tyre barrier at about 200 kilometres an hour (120 mph).

The hospital spokesman said Hakkinen, 27, had been moved to another specialist unit and was making steady progress.

He said Hakkinen was expected to spend another seven to 10 days in hospital before returning home.

Apart from his head injuries, Hakkinen also suffered a fracture to the base of his skull which prevented him breathing and forced doctors to perform a tracheotomy at the track, according to reports.

Hakkinen was unconscious for 24 hours after he lost control of his McLaren before it hurtled airborne off a curb and into a tyre wall.

Wihsat move to 3rd after eighth week

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — With the first leg of the competition beyond its halfway point, the Kingdom's Premier League soccer teams began to take their normal place on the 12-team standings.

During the past week Al Wihsat's 2-1 win over Al Qadissieh moved them from an unusual 7th to 3rd place, while Al Hussein Irid maintained their lead after upsetting Kufraoum 2-1.

It was Kufraoum's first defeat of the season. The newcomer team, playing their second season in the prestigious group, now dropped to 7th after keeping an advanced position until the sixth week.

Former champions Al Faisali drew 1-1 with Al Jazireh and remained in sixth place, tying the league's two ambitious teams, Kufraoum and Jazireh, with 13 points each.

Al Ramtha remained in second place, two points behind leaders Al Hussein, after their goalless draw with Al Ahli who are stuck at a disappointing 9th place.

Sabah and Jaliil could not improve their 10th and 11th places after their goalless draw but Al Baqaa scored an important 5-1 win over newcomers Russeifa in the final match of the week.

STANDINGS AFTER 8TH WEEK

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Hussein	8	5	2	1	18	4	17
Ramtha	8	4	3	1	11	3	15
Wihsat	8	4	2	2	12	6	14
Qadissieh	8	4	2	2	12	9	14
Jazireh	8	4	1	3	14	11	13
Faisali	8	3	4	1	8	5	13
Kufraoum	8	3	4	1	6	4	12
Baqaa	8	3	2	3	14	13	11
Ahli	8	1	5	2	6	8	8
Sabah	8	—	6	2	6	11	6
Jaliil	8	1	1	6	7	18	4
Russeifa	8	—	—	8	8	32	—



Santander's Alberto (centre) fights for the ball with Real Madrid's Hierro (right) as Redondo of Real Madrid looks on during their first division soccer match (AFP photo)

Atletico draw in Spanish League

MADRID (R) — An acrobatic display by goalkeeper Wilfred Agbonavbare enabled bottom club Rayo Vallecano to hold Spanish League leaders Atletico Madrid to a goalless draw on Sunday.

Second-placed Barcelona drew 1-1 with Tenerife, their early lead on a powerful left-foot drive by Roger Garcia wiped out when Julio Llorente jumped to head a corner down into a net.

It beat keeper Jesus Agon, in goal in place of the absent Carlos Busquets, whose hands were burned in a domestic mishap last week.

Agbonavbare, Rayo Valle-

cano's Nigerian international, saved at close range on several occasions from Atletico's Bulgarian striker Luboslav Penev, who also missed a first-half penalty.

Penev, a summer signing from Valencia, has been one of the key figures in Atletico's revival after the side narrowly avoided relegation last season, but he was lost his shooting touch in recent months.

Real suffered a further blow when defensive giant Fernando Hierro was forced off through injury. It was his first game after three weeks on the sidelines and he is now doubtful for next week's Madrid derby.

We do better than...
Real Madrid 2-0 away at Racing Santander in a match where the title holder badly missed a penalty.

Argentine forward Juan Eduardo Ensaider, Real's only major signing this season, wasted several chances.

Real went down 2-0 away at Racing Santander in a match where the title holder badly missed a penalty.

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H WEEK

F GA Pts

8 4 17

1 3 15

2 6 14

4 9 14

3 11 13

5 13

6 4 13

4 13 13

6 6 8

7 11 6

18 4

32

Graft wins 8th WTA title of the year

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Steffi Graf survived a strong challenge from unseeded Lori McNeil to win the \$100,000 Advanta Championships on Sunday 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.

The victory gave the top-seeded Graf eight tournament titles in 1995, more than any woman player. She has won each final she has played in, including the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

"It's the best year I've ever had, even better than in '88 when I won the Grand Slam," said Graf, who is seeded number one this week's Corel WTA Tour Championships in New York. "The competition is better now. There were difficult tournaments, difficult circumstances this year."

Graf won despite losing her serve four times to McNeil, including twice in a row at the end of the second set when the 63-ranked McNeil rallied from 3-4 to win the set. Graf had faced only one break point in her previous two matches, wins

against Zina Garrison Jackson and Meredith McGrath. McNeil had defeated Graf the last two times the two had played, at Wimbledon in 1994 and at the 1992 Virginia Slims Championships.

"She has always been at the top of my list of opponents who give me trouble," Graf said. "There aren't that many players that come in to the net constantly, keep the ball low and force you to pass them."

In the third set, Graf broke McNeil in the first game and again in the third game, the latter aided by McNeil's missed overhead on game point.

"That was one I'd like to have back," McNeil said. "I didn't really reach up to it, and I could have been in better position."

Graf held the advantage in the end, when McNeil netted an easy volley on the second match point.

Graf received \$148,000 for her victory and McNeil received \$66,500.



Houston Oilers defensive tackle Glenn Montgomery (right) grabs Cincinnati Bengals running back Eric Bieniemy behind the line of scrimmage for a loss during the second quarter of their game (Reuters photo)

49ers crash Cowboys 38-20

DALLAS (AFP) — Reigning American football champion San Francisco served notice that no matter how they struggle and who they lose to injuries, the 49ers remain the team to beat.

Playing without injured quarterback Steve Young, San Francisco stunned Dallas 38-20 here Sunday, regaining a share of their division lead by upsetting the winningest team in the National Football League (NFL).

The 49ers' southpaw quarterback remained sidelined with a bruised throwing shoulder, but backup Elvis Grbac proved more than adequate for San Francisco (6-4) to snap a two-game losing skid and topple Dallas (3-2).

More devastating than the defeat for Dallas was an injury to quarterback Troy Aikman, who missed most of the game with an injured left knee.

Grbac connected over the middle to Jerry Rice and the NFL all-time touchdown leader ran 73 yards to complete an 81-yard touchdown play and give the 49ers a lead 61 seconds into the game.

Marino began the game 38 yards shy of Tarkenton's 18-season mark of 47,003 yards. Marino, in his 13th season, broke the record with a nine-yard pass to Irving Fryar in the first quarter and finished with 27 completions in 37 attempts for 333 yards and two touchdowns. But Marino surrendered two interceptions and a key fumble in the fourth quarter.

"We didn't get the job done against these guys," Miami coach Don Shula said. "Somebody has got to rise to the occasion. It's got to happen. We had some opportunities early and didn't take advantage of them. In the second half, we just couldn't make any plays."

Green Bay's Brett Favre ignored a sprained left ankle and tied a team record with five touchdown passes, including two each to Edgar Bennett and Robert Brooks, and the Packers beat Chicago 35-28. Favre was 25-of-33 for 336 yards, matching a mark last achieved in 1983.

Brett Favre is the heart and soul of this team," Packer defender Reggie White said. "He is one tough guy to play on an ankle like that."

Jim Kelly threw for 272 yards and connected with Bill Brooks for two touchdowns as Buffalo beat Atlanta 23-17 in a matchup of division leaders. The game marked the return of Bills coach Marv Levy after prostate surgery and rusher Thurman Thomas after a hamstring injury.

"I've been into it all week now and it's a thrill to come out of the tunnel and into the stadium," Levy said. "When you overcome an illness it's an even greater thrill."

Kurt Schulz's end-zone interception with 52 seconds to play sealed the victory for the Bills and gave the safety an NFL-best six pickoffs this season. Bill's linebacker Bryce Paup had two sacks, giving him a career-best and NFL high 13 this season.

Lin Elliott kicked three field goals and Kansas City had rushing touchdowns by Steve Bono and Marcus Allen to beat San Diego 22-7, raising the Chiefs to an NFL-best 9-1 as they look toward a November 23 showdown at

Dallas.

Detroit's Scott Mitchell threw for 260 yards and a touchdown and ran for another score in a 27-24 triumph over Tampa Bay.

The triumphant Lions (4-6) have been told coach Wayne Fontes will be fired if they miss the playoffs.

Jim Everett completed 27-of-237 passes for 228 yards and two touchdowns to lead New Orleans past Indianapolis 17-14 for their fourth victory in five games after the Saints had started 0-5. Gary Blanchard missed a tying field goal try with eight seconds to play.

Chris Miller threw two touchdown passes and the St. Louis Rams won their first

game in their new domed stadium 28-17 over Carolina, which had a four-game win streak snapped.

Jeff Blake threw for 270 yards and two touchdowns and Cincinnati beat Houston 32-25 while rookie Joey Galloway scored three touchdowns, one on an 86-yard reverse run, as Seattle beat Jacksonville 47-30.

Jeff Hostetler won his first game in New York since he played for the Giants, throwing a touchdown pass for Oakland in a 17-15 victory over his former teammates.

Qadry Ismail caught a 50-yard touchdown pass from Warren Moon 2:16 into overtime to give Minnesota a 30-24 triumph at Arizona.

NFL results

Buffalo	23	Atlanta	17
Detroit	27	Tampa Bay	24
Green Bay	35	Chicago	28
Cincinnati	32	Houston	25
Seattle	47	Jacksonville	30
New England	34	Miami	17
New Orleans	17	Indianapolis	14
Oakland	17	NY Giants	13
St. Louis	28	Carolina	17
Minnesota	30	Arizona	24 (OT)
San Francisco	38	Dallas	20
Kansas City	22	San Diego	7
Philadelphia	31	Denver	13

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Champs repeat NY marathon titles

NEW YORK (AP) — His tender embrace at the finish line and the protective arm he wrapped around her shoulder on the victory stand underscored the poignancy of their triumphs in the New York City Marathon for the second straight year.

German Silva and Kenya's Tegla Loroupe ran not only to defend championships, they ran to keep promises to the dead — to their father, to her sister.

Silva's victory Sunday in 2 hours, 11 minutes was 21 seconds quicker than last year, when the Mexican made a wrong turn about a quarter-mile (1/2 kilometre) from the finish before being redirected by a policeman to beat fellow country man Benjamin Parades by two seconds in the closest finish in the race's 26-year history.

This year, Silva beat Paul Evans of Britain, who finished second in 2:11:05, with William Koch of Kenya third in a personal-best 2:11:19.

But even though Silva



New York City Marathon winners German Silva (left) of Mexico and Tegla Loroupe of Kenya smile as they wear their victory wreaths. Both won for the record consecutive year (AFP photo)

had promised not to return home to Kenya until after the race.

"When I was training I could see her face and she was smiling," Loroupe said. "Even today, she was still smiling. I ran a good race for her, but when I finished, I was sad because when I go home next week I'm going to see the children but not my sister. She gave me a lot of strength and encouragement."

Silva became the first repeat champion since Italy's Orlando Pizzulato won in 1984 and 1985, while Loroupe became the first woman to win two in a row since Norway's Grete Waitz, a nine-time champion, won her fifth straight in 1986.

Loroupe's time was 2:28.06

— 29 seconds slower than in 1994. She was followed by world champion Manuela Machado of Portugal in 2:30.37 and first-time marathoner Lieve Slegers of Belgium in 2:32.08.

Silva said his emotions were the same as Loroupe's, because of their dual anguish.

"It is something I have in common with Tegla," he said. "We feel together."

"I was running for my father. He was in my mind. He's with me everywhere. I was doing this in his memory. When I remember him, he gives me motivation. I'm sure

wherever my father is, he's happy and proud."

Loroupe, who said she

would take care of her sister's children, was grieving the past two weeks. But she pushed aside her heartbreak to win the women's division by about 750 metres.

The temperature at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in Staten Island at the start of the 42.2-kilometre (26-mile, 38-yard) event was 4 degrees Celsius (40 Fahrenheit), matching the previous low, first set in 1981 and equalled in 1989 and 1992. The winds were gusting up to 88-97 kph (55-60 mph), and the wind chill factor was a bitter minus-8 degrees Celsius (18 Fahrenheit).

With Liverpool having always frowned on players going public about club matters, Collymore may face a hefty fine and could even be placed on the transfer list.

The frustrated Collymore has also seen his chances of a place in England's European Championship squad fade and, while many of his Liverpool teammates linked up with their national teams last weekend, he was playing for the Liverpool reserves.

Record signing Collymore's future on line

LIVERPOOL (R) — The Liverpool future of Britain's most expensive player Stan Collymore was on the line on Monday after he said he would rather quit soccer than spend two years in the reserves.

Collymore, who joined Liverpool from Nottingham Forest for £8.5 million (\$13.4 million) in the off-season, has been relegated to the bench

because of the fine form of

fellow strikers Robbie Fowler

and Ian Rush.

The 24-year-old England

hopeful said in comments

published in a British Sunday

paper that if "I feel now that I'd be stuck at Liverpool for the next two years and just be average, and just go through the motions, I would give up football tomorrow without a doubt."

Collymore, who lost his

first team place through ill-

ness and injury, also seemed

to criticise Liverpool mana-

ger Roy Evans for not plan-

ning a specific role for him before spending millions to take him to Merseyside.

Evans, unable to disguise

his anger, said: "We are very

disappointed that Stan Colly-

more has chosen to go public

and air his problems like this."

"We can't take any action

until I meet the player, and I

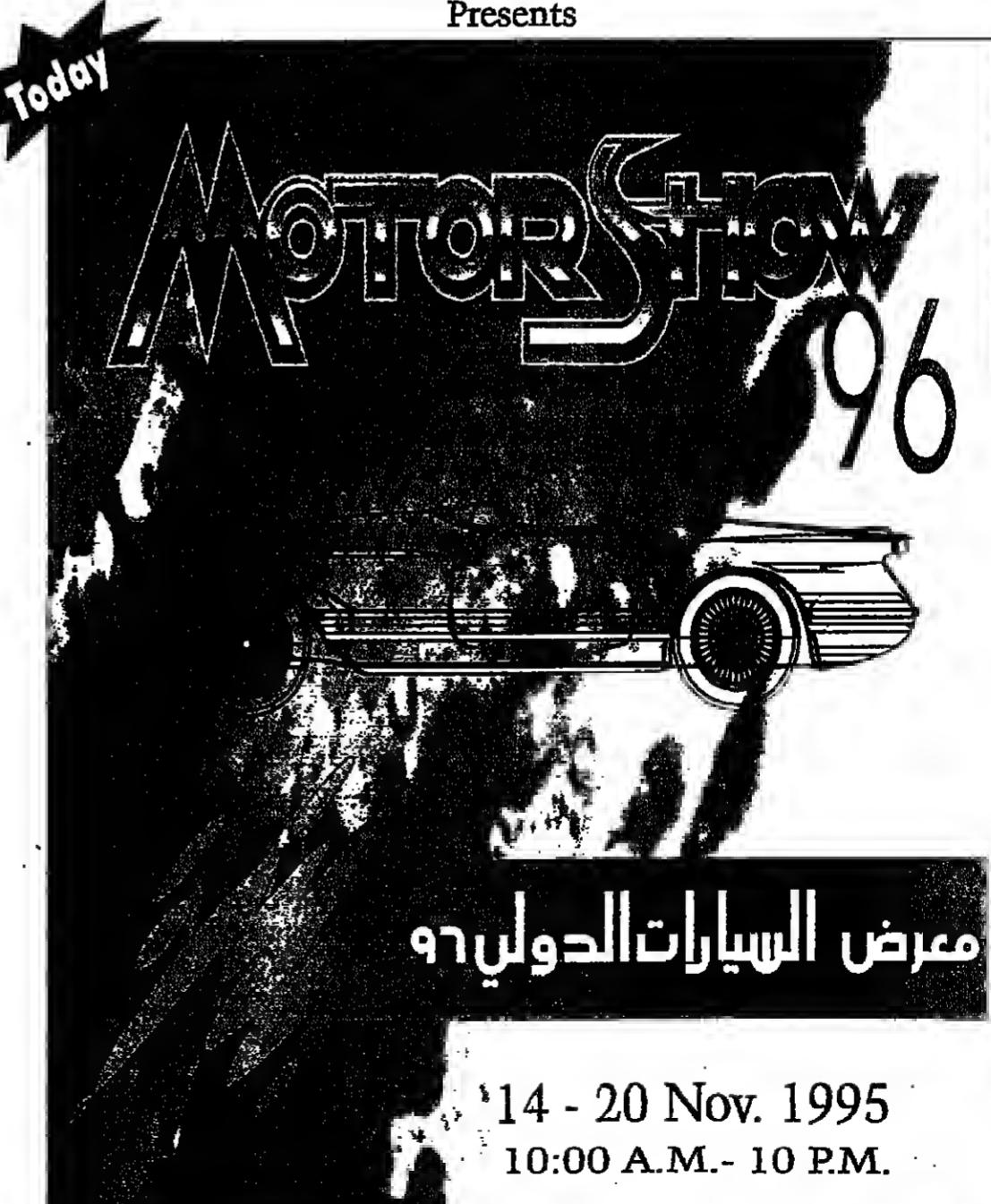
won't make any further com-

ment until we've discussed

the situation with him."

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No option but to follow commitment to peace, Peres tells parliament

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL WILL respect its commitments to the Palestinians and work for peace with Syria and Lebanon, acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres told parliament Monday as he detailed his policy objectives at a tribute to Yitzhak Rabin.

"We must pursue the peace process. It is what he would have wanted," he told the solemn gathering at the Knesset attended by Mr. Rabin's widow Leah, and their children and grandchildren.

"The peace we have achieved for the moment is not complete."

He outlined his goals as — security for Israel, respecting the commitments to the Palestinians, keeping peace with Egypt and Jordan and searching for peace with Syria and Lebanon."

Mr. Rabin's chair was draped in black material while a photograph of him fixed with a black ribbon was placed at the front of the Knesset, next to the speakers.

"Once and for all we must come to a decision so that the future generations are free from the dilemmas we face today," Mr. Peres said.

Mr. Peres was due to be named the Labour Party's new leader at a meeting of

the 1,500-member central committee in Tel Aviv later Monday and formally proposed for the post of prime minister.

He became acting prime minister after the assassination of Mr. Rabin by a Jewish fanatic on Nov. 4 at a Tel Aviv peace rally.

"There is no peace without a peace. A true peace has to be made with neighbours," he told the parliament.

"Yitzhak Rabin knew that in maintaining the status quo, we would arrive at an impasse. Because of the demographic evolution, this country would become bi-national. The decision to compromise, even though painful, will guarantee the democratic and Jewish character of our state."

He stressed the need to preserve the strength of the army within the political debate and repeated his commitment to the "unity" of Jerusalem, of which the eastern part was seized and "annexed" in 1967.

He also hit out at the authors of Mr. Rabin's murder

saying "extremists" have no place in our society."

Right-wing opposition Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu recalled Mr. Rabin's role "in the three years to lead a complex and controversial political process."

(Continued from page 71)

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab Bank has donated JD 1.5 million to the Jubilee School, which is run by the Nour Al Hussein Foundation (NUF), to help build a physical education wing complete with the required facilities.

The donation was presented Monday to His Majesty King Hussein at the Royal Court in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Noor by Senator



Palestinian policemen and residents of Jenin dance to celebrate the end of 28 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank town on Monday. The Israeli army withdrew from Jenin and handed over the town to the Palestinian National Authority in implementation of a Sept. 28 agreement signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (see page one) (Reuters photo)

Arab Bank donates JD1.5m to Jubilee School

Abdul Majid Shuman, chairman and general manager of the Arab Bank, and Khaled Shuman, his deputy.

Mr. Shuman presented the King with a message announcing the donation and the King voiced deep appreciation and thanks to Mr. Shuman and the Arab Bank for "this generous contribution which would contribute to further boosting the services of the

school to the local communities."

The Jubilee School, which opened its doors in 1993 at a temporary site in Abdoun district, offers gifted students a unique learning experience and a curriculum based on their special needs, capabilities and experiences.

The advanced academic programme at the school meets the intellectual, effective and creative needs

PNA frees Hamas activists; group may take part in poll

GAZA CITY (AFP) — About 13 Hamas militants have been released by Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which said Monday that the hardline group was ready to take part in the first Palestinian elections.

But Hamas officials who announced the releases said no decision had been reached on the group's participation in the poll.

"Yesterday, the Palestinian National Authority freed about 13 members," said one leader from the Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas, asking to remain anonymous. Around 30 still remain in jail, according to Hamas sources.

The top Hamas leader in Gaza and managing director of the Hamas mouvement, Al Watan, Sheikh Sayed Abu Messamich, was not among those freed. He was sentenced to two years in jail by a Palestinian court in July.

But there had been "an offer to release him because there is a possibility that he might be in the reconciliation talks," an official said.

Assassin and rabbis in 'unholy alliance'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Radical rabbis suspected of having incited and given their blessing to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's murder were Monday in the sights of the Israeli police who fear more violence.

A senior police official said several rabbis could be arrested this week for issuing a religious decree calling for Mr. Rabin's assassination on the grounds that he was endangering the Jewish people with his peace policy.

Three rabbis are at the heart of the investigation. Dov Lior from Kyrat Arba settlement near Hebron, Nahum Rabinovitch of Maale Adumim settlement near Jerusalem, and Eliyahu Zini from a Haifa university.

Despite their fierce opposition to the peace process, they have all denied involvement in Mr. Rabin's murder by a far-right religious Jew, Yigal Amir, at a Tel Aviv peace rally on Nov. 4.

But a colleague, Yoel Bin Nun, has threatened to hand over a list of implicated rabbis to the authorities.

Under death threats since his warning to divulge names, Rabin Bin Nun now wears a bullet-proof vest and has six bodyguards from the internal security service Shin Bet.

"We can't afford to take any more risks. I know, and I've heard it several times, that rabbis issued this religious decree. We now understand, but too late, the influence that such words have had," he said.

Rabbi Bin Nun took the

Israeli air raid kills 2 in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes attacked a Palestinian guerrilla base south of Beirut on Monday, killing two members of a guerrilla group and wounding eight others, police and the organisation said.

Mr. Arafat said Saturday that he would meet with Hamas leaders in the coming month, and he has also released top Hamas leaders from Gaza jails.

But so far Hamas has refused to take part in the elections, as he attended ceremonies to mark the Israeli army withdrawal from Jenin after 28 years of occupation.

But Hamas official Ahmad Bahr said: "I do not believe we will participate in the elections. We have not issued any statement on the subject and there has not been the least comment from us on this."

"It would be better if Mr. Abdul Rahim gives the identity of the person who made the commitment, because Hamas cannot take part in polls based on autonomy accords signed with Israel," Mr. Bahr retorted.

Al Bilad editor, cartoonist detained

By a Jordan Times Reporter

AMMAN — The chief editor and the cartoonist of the weekly newspaper Al Bilad Monday appeared in court and were ordered held without bail pending trial for allegedly tarnishing the image of Islam.

Al Bilad's newly-appointed editor Khaled Karash and the newspaper's cartoonist Usama Hanaa were ordered held after the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdul Muttalib Thabet, filed a complaint accusing the two of publishing cartoons that violated the Press and Publications Law that prohibits the printing of any material that invokes contempt of religion. Naseef Tawarch, Al Bilad's publisher, told the Jordan Times.

The cartoon, entitled "the hunchback and the politician," was run on the second page of the weekly for three consecutive weeks. The weekly's contents tackle current events and news in a satirical manner.

"Rabin was seen by the assassin as putting in the danger the Jewish people. So he had to be killed," the rabbi said, protesting that the text of the decree had been distorted.

"Nobody doubts that some rabbis are partly responsible for what happened because they did not weigh the implications of their words," said Rabbi Fruman.

Several other rabbis complained of a witchhunt. "It's dangerous just to talk. I feel pursued and probably my telephone is being bugged," said a Kyrat Arba rabbi, asking not to be named.

No comment was available Monday night from Mr. Thabet, who filed the case against Al Bilad. Both journalists are being held in the judicial prison.

Early polls begin in Algeria

ALGIERS (AP) — Early voting began Monday in sub-Saharan Algeria as well as for members of Algeria's security services, three days ahead of the main poll in controversial presidential elections here.

Additional security measures have been brought in to protect voters and polling stations, amid a boycott by Islamic fundamentalists who have pledged to disrupt the election.

Military reinforcements were stationed on all main roads into Algiers, and buses and lorries searched systematically. Extra roadblocks were set up by the army outside major towns.

At midday, state television showed long queues at Algerian barracks, where soldiers of the 140,000-strong army waited their turn, electoral card in hand.

Portraits of the four candidates — incumbent Liamine Zetoual, Said Sadi, Mahfoud Nahmeh and Nonredine Boukrouh — festooned the walls of the voting centres.

At his last rally Monday, Mr. Zeroual called for "unity" and denounced extremists who he claimed were "ready to kill half of the Algerian people to gain access to power."

Mr. Zeroual, stressing that he was an independent candidate, called on Algerians to vote in "total freedom" and to reject "fictitious commitments."

The electoral campaign

was due to end at midnight Monday, but since early in the day, weekly markets and schools have been shut, sports events postponed and lorries directed onto major roads.

Gendarmes and police

were also taking part in polls.

Voting centres were also set up at the police school and at National Security headquarters at Bab el Oued.

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LOS ANGELES (R) — Eight countries plan to issue postage stamps honouring John Lennon on Dec. 8, the 15th anniversary of the former Beatle's murder.

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At the same rally, world

1,500-metre champion Hassiba Bouhssira urged Algiers

people to vote "for the lion Lumine Zeroual," while former television presenter Leila read a text from the poet Omar Barnouzi.

Many families braved heavy rain to attend the rally, bringing their children and dressed in Zeroual T-shirts. Islamic candidate Mahfoud Nahmeh, was due to hold his last rally in Algiers, and Nonredine Boukrouh in Bab el Oued. Said Sadi was due to wrap up his campaign in Bechar in the south.

In southern Algeria, scores of mobile polling stations began a drive through small communities to allow the nomadic population to vote, while soldiers in the 140,000-strong army started voting within their barracks.

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